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The Life and Works
of
Alfred Lord Tennyson

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME XII



Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

from a portrait in the possession of William, Lord Tennyson

Drawn by G. F. Watts, R. A., August, 1851

The Works of
Alfred
Lord Tennyson
Poet Laureate

VOLUME VIII

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ILLUSTRATION

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, photogravure plate from the portrait
in the possession of Hallam, Lord Tennyson, painted by
G. F. Watts, R.A., in August 1891 . . . *Frontispiece*

THE FORESTERS
ROBIN HOOD AND MAID MARIAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ROBIN HOOD, *Earl of Huntingdon.*

KING RICHARD, *Cœur de Lion.*

PRINCE JOHN.

LITTLE JOHN,

WILL SCARLET,

FRIAR TUCK,

MUCH,

A JUSTICIARY.

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

ABBOT OF ST. MARY'S.

SIR RICHARD LEA.

WALTER LEA, *son of Sir Richard Lea.*

MAID MARIAN, *daughter of Sir Richard Lea.*

KATE, *attendant on Marian.*

OLD WOMAN.

*Retainers, Messengers, Merry Men, Mercenaries, Friars, Beggars,
Sailors, Peasants (men and women), etc.*

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

SCENE I.—THE BOND

SCENES II. III.—THE OUTLAWRY

SCENE I.—THE GARDEN BEFORE SIR RICHARD LEA'S CASTLE

KATE (*gathering flowers*). These roses for my Lady Marian ; these lilies to lighten Sir Richard's black room, where he sits and eats his heart for want of money to pay the Abbot. [*Sings.*

The warrior Earl of Allendale,
He loved the Lady Anne ;
The lady loved the master well,
The maid she loved the man.

All in the castle garden,
Or ever the day began,
The lady gave a rose to the Earl,
The maid a rose to the man.

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

‘I go to fight in Scotland
With many a savage clan’;
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,
The maid her hand to the man.

‘Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl!’
And ever a tear down ran.
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,
And the maid a kiss to the man.

Enter four ragged RETAINERS

FIRST RETAINER. You do well, Mistress Kate, to sing and to gather roses. You be fed with tit-bits, you, and we be dogs that have only the bones, till we be only bones our own selves.

KATE. I am fed with tit-bits no more than you are, but I keep a good heart and make the most of it, and, truth to say, Sir Richard and my Lady Marian fare wellnigh as sparely as their people.

SECOND RETAINER. And look at our suits, out at knee, out at elbow. We be more like scarecrows in a field than decent serving men; and then, I pray you, look at Robin Earl of Huntingdon’s men.

FIRST RETAINER. She hath looked well at one of ’em, Little John.

THIRD RETAINER. Ay, how fine they be in their liveries, and each of ’em as full of meat as an egg, and as sleek and as round-about as a mellow codlin.

FOURTH RETAINER. But I be worse off than any of you, for I be lean by nature, and if you cram me crop-full I be little better than Famine

in the picture, but if you starve me I be Gaffer Death himself. I would like to show you, Mistress Kate, how bare and spare I be on the rib : I be lanker than an old horse turned out to die on the common.

KATE. Spare me thy spare ribs, I pray thee ; but now I ask you all, did none of you love young Walter Lea ?

FIRST RETAINER. Ay, if he had not gone to fight the king's battles, we should have better battels at home.

KATE. Right as an Oxford scholar, but the boy was taken prisoner by the Moors.

FIRST RETAINER. Ay.

KATE. And Sir Richard was told he might be ransomed for two thousand marks in gold.

FIRST RETAINER. Ay.

KATE. Then he borrowed the monies from the Abbot of York, the Sheriff's brother. And if they be not paid back at the end of the year, the land goes to the Abbot.

FIRST RETAINER. No news of young Walter ?

KATE. None, nor of the gold, nor the man who took out the gold : but now ye know why we live so stintedly, and why ye have so few grains to peck at. Sir Richard must scrape and scrape till he get to the land again. Come, come, why do ye loiter here ? Carry fresh rushes into the dining-hall, for those that are there, they be so greasy, and smell so vilely that my Lady Marian holds her nose when she steps across it.

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

FOURTH RETAINER. Why there, now ! that very word 'greasy' hath a kind of unction in it, a smack of relish about it. The rats have gnawed 'em already. I pray Heaven we may not have to take to the rushes. [*Exeunt.*]

KATE. Poor fellows !

The lady gave her hand to the Earl,
The maid her hand to the man.

Enter LITTLE JOHN

LITTLE JOHN. My master, Robin the Earl, is always a-telling us that every man, for the sake of the great blessed Mother in heaven, and for the love of his own little mother on earth, should handle all womankind gently, and hold them in all honour, and speak small to 'em, and not scare 'em, but go about to come at their love with all manner of homages, and observances, and circumbendibuses.

KATE.

The lady gave a rose to the Earl,
The maid a rose to the man.

LITTLE JOHN (*seeing her*). O the sacred little thing ! What a shape ! what lovely arms ! A rose to the man ! Ay, the man had given her a rose and she gave him another.

KATE. Shall I keep one little rose for Little John ? No.

LITTLE JOHN. There, there ! You see I was right. She hath a tenderness toward me, but is

too shy to show it. It is in her, in the woman, and the man must bring it out of her.

KATE.

She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,
The maid a kiss to the man.

LITTLE JOHN. Did she? But there I am sure the ballad is at fault. It should have told us how the man first kissed the maid. She doesn't see me. Shall I be bold? shall I touch her? shall I give her the first kiss? O sweet Kate, my first love, the first kiss, the first kiss!

KATE (*turns and kisses him*). Why lookest thou so amazed?

LITTLE JOHN. I cannot tell; but I came to give thee the first kiss, and thou hast given it me.

KATE. But if a man and a maid care for one another, does it matter so much if the maid give the first kiss?

LITTLE JOHN. I cannot tell, but I had sooner have given thee the first kiss. I was dreaming of it all the way hither.

KATE. Dream of it, then, all the way back, for now I will have none of it.

LITTLE JOHN. Nay, now thou hast given me the man's kiss, let me give thee the maid's.

KATE. If thou draw one inch nearer, I will give thee a buffet on the face.

LITTLE JOHN. Wilt thou not give me rather the little rose for Little John?

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

KATE (*throws it down and tramples on it*).
There !

[KATE, *seeing* MARIAN, *exit hurriedly*.

Enter MARIAN (*singing*)

Love flew in at the window
As Wealth walk'd in at the door.
'You have come for you saw Wealth coming,' said I.
But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet little cry,
I'll cleave to you rich or poor.

Wealth dropt out of the window,
Poverty crept thro' the door.
'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,' said I,
But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me the lie,
I cling to you all the more.

LITTLE JOHN. Thanks, my lady—inasmuch as I am a true believer in true love myself, and your Ladyship hath sung the old proverb out of fashion.

MARIAN. Ay but thou hast ruffled my woman, Little John. She hath the fire in her face and the dew in her eyes. I believed thee to be too solemn and formal to be a ruffler. Out upon thee !

LITTLE JOHN. I am no ruffler, my lady ; but I pray you, my lady, if a man and a maid love one another, may the maid give the first kiss ?

MARIAN. It will be all the more gracious of her if she do.

LITTLE JOHN. I cannot tell. Manners be so corrupt, and these are the days of Prince John.

[*Exit*.

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (reading a bond)

SIR RICHARD. Marian !

MARIAN. Father !

SIR RICHARD. Who parted from thee even now ?

MARIAN. That strange starched stiff creature, Little John, the Earl's man. He would grapple with a lion like the King, and is flustered by a girl's kiss.

SIR RICHARD. There never was an Earl so true a friend of the people as Lord Robin of Huntingdon.

MARIAN. A gallant Earl. I love him as I hate John.

SIR RICHARD. I fear me he hath wasted his revenues in the service of our good king Richard against the party of John, as I have done, as I have done : and where is Richard ?

MARIAN. Cleave to him, father ! he will come home at last.

SIR RICHARD. I trust he will, but if he do not I and thou are but beggars.

MARIAN. We will be beggar'd then and be true to the King.

SIR RICHARD. Thou speakest like a fool or a woman. Canst thou endure to be a beggar whose whole life hath been folded like a blossom in the sheath, like a careless sleeper in the down ; who never hast felt a want, to whom all things,

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

up to this present, have come as freely as heaven's air and mother's milk?

MARIAN. Tut, father! I am none of your delicate Norman maidens who can only broider and mayhap ride a-hawking with the help of the men. I can bake and I can brew, and by all the saints I can shoot almost as closely with the bow as the great Earl himself. I have played at the foils too with Kate: but is not to-day his birthday?

SIR RICHARD. Dost thou love him indeed, that thou keepest a record of his birthdays? Thou knowest that the Sheriff of Nottingham loves thee.

MARIAN. The Sheriff dare to love me? me who worship Robin the great Earl of Huntingdon? I love him as a damsel of his day might have loved Harold the Saxon, or Hereward the Wake. They both fought against the tyranny of the kings, the Normans. But then your Sheriff, your little man, if he dare to fight at all, would fight for his rents, his leases, his houses, his monies, his oxen, his dinners, himself. Now your great man, your Robin, all England's Robin, fights not for himself but for the people of England. This John—this Norman tyranny—the stream is bearing us all down, and our little Sheriff will ever swim with the stream! but our great man, our Robin, against it. And how often in old histories have the great men striven against the stream, and how often in the

long sweep of years to come must the great man strive against it again to save his country, and the liberties of his people ! God bless our well-beloved Robin, Earl of Huntingdon.

SIR RICHARD. Ay, ay. He wore thy colours once at a tourney. I am old and forget. Was Prince John there ?

MARIAN. The Sheriff of Nottingham was there—not John.

SIR RICHARD. Beware of John and the Sheriff of Nottingham. They hunt in couples, and when they look at a maid they blast her.

MARIAN. Then the maid is not high-hearted enough.

SIR RICHARD. There—there—be not a fool again. Their aim is ever at that which flies highest—but O girl, girl, I am almost in despair. Those two thousand marks lent me by the Abbot for the ransom of my son Walter—I believed this Abbot of the party of King Richard, and he hath sold himself to that beast John—they must be paid in a year and a month, or I lose the land. There is one that should be grateful to me overseas, a Count in Brittany—he lives near Quimper. I saved his life once in battle. He has monies. I will go to him. I saved him. I will try him. I am all but sure of him. I will go to him.

MARIAN. And I will follow thee, and God help us both.

SIR RICHARD. Child, thou shouldst marry

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

one who will pay the mortgage. This Robin, this Earl of Huntingdon—he is a friend of Richard—I know not, but he may save the land, he may save the land.

MARIAN (*showing a cross hung round her neck*). Father, you see this cross?

SIR RICHARD. Ay the King, thy godfather, gave it thee when a baby.

MARIAN. And he said that whenever I married he would give me away, and on this cross I have sworn [*kisses it*] that till I myself pass away, there is no other man that shall give me away.

SIR RICHARD. Lo there—thou art fool again—I am all as loyal as thyself, but what a vow! what a vow!

Re-enter LITTLE JOHN

LITTLE JOHN. My Lady Marian, your woman so flustered me that I forgot my message from the Earl. To-day he hath accomplished his thirtieth birthday, and he prays your ladyship and your ladyship's father to be present at his banquet to-night.

MARIAN. Say, we will come.

LITTLE JOHN. And I pray you, my lady, to stand between me and your woman, Kate.

MARIAN. I will speak with her.

LITTLE JOHN. I thank you, my lady, and I wish you and your ladyship's father a most exceedingly good morning. [*Exit.*]

SIR RICHARD. Thou hast answered for me, but I know not if I will let thee go.

MARIAN. I mean to go.

SIR RICHARD. Not if I barred thee up in thy chamber, like a bird in a cage.

MARIAN. Then I would drop from the casement, like a spider.

SIR RICHARD. But I would hoist the draw-bridge, like thy master.

MARIAN. And I would swim the moat, like an otter.

SIR RICHARD. But I would set my men-at-arms to oppose thee, like the Lord of the Castle.

MARIAN. And I would break through them all, like the King of England.

SIR RICHARD. Well, thou shalt go, but O the land! the land! my great great great grandfather, my great great grandfather, my great grandfather, my grandfather and my own father—they were born and bred on it—it was their mother—they have trodden it for half a thousand years, and whenever I set my own foot on it I say to it, Thou art mine, and it answers, I am thine to the very heart of the earth—but now I have lost my gold, I have lost my son, and I shall lose my land also. Down to the devil with this bond that beggars me! [*Flings down the bond.*]

MARIAN. Take it again, dear father, be not wroth at the dumb parchment. Sufficient for the day, dear father! let us be merry to-night at the banquet.

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

SCENE II

A HALL IN THE HOUSE OF ROBIN HOOD THE EARL OF HUNTINGDON. DOORS OPEN INTO A BANQUETING-HALL WHERE HE IS AT FEAST WITH HIS FRIENDS.

DRINKING SONG

Long live Richard,
Robin and Richard !
Long live Richard !
Down with John !
Drink to the Lion-heart
Every one !
Pledge the Plantagenet,
Him that is gone.
Who knows whither ?
God's good Angel
Help him back hither,
And down with John !
Long live Robin,
Robin and Richard !
Long live Robin,
And down with John !

Enter PRINCE JOHN *disguised as a monk and the*
SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM. *Cries of 'Down with*
John,' 'Long live King Richard,' 'Down with
John.'

PRINCE JOHN. Down with John ! ha. Shall I be known ? is my disguise perfect ?

SHERIFF. Perfect—who should know you for Prince John, so that you keep the cowl down and speak not ?

[Shouts from the banquet-room.]

PRINCE JOHN. Thou and I will still these revelries presently.

[*Shouts, 'Long live King Richard !'*

I come here to see this daughter of Sir Richard of the Lea and if her beauties answer their report. If so—

SHERIFF. If so—

[*Shouts, 'Down with John !'*

PRINCE JOHN. You hear !

SHERIFF. Yes, my lord, fear not. I will answer for you.

Enter LITTLE JOHN, SCARLET, MUCH, *etc.*, *from the banquet singing a snatch of the Drinking Song.*

LITTLE JOHN. I am a silent man myself, and all the more wonder at our Earl. What a wealth of words—O Lord, I will live and die for King Richard—not so much for the cause as for the Earl. O Lord, I am easily led by words, but I think the Earl hath right. Scarlet, hath not the Earl right ? What makes thee so down in the mouth ?

SCARLET. I doubt not, I doubt not, and though I be down in the mouth, I will swear by the head of the Earl.

LITTLE JOHN. Thou Much, miller's son, hath not the Earl right ?

MUCH. More water goes by the mill than the miller wots of, and more goes to make right than I know of, but for all that I will swear the

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

Earl hath right. But they are coming hither for the dance—

Enter FRIAR TUCK

be they not, Friar Tuck? Thou art the Earl's confessor and shouldst know.

TUCK. Ay, ay, and but that I am a man of weight, and the weight of the church to boot on my shoulders, I would dance too. Fa, la, la, fa, la, la. *[Capering.]*

MUCH. But doth not the weight of the flesh at odd times overbalance the weight of the church, ha friar?

TUCK. Homo sum. I love my dinner—but I can fast, I can fast; and as to other frailties of the flesh—out upon thee! Homo sum, sed virgo sum, I am a virgin, my masters, I am a virgin.

MUCH. And a virgin, my masters, three yards about the waist is like to remain a virgin, for who could embrace such an armful of joy?

TUCK. Knave, there is a lot of wild fellows in Sherwood Forest who hold by King Richard. If ever I meet thee there, I will break thy sconce with my quarterstaff.

Enter from the banqueting-hall SIR RICHARD LEA,
ROBIN HOOD, *etc.*

ROBIN. My guests and friends, Sir Richard, all of you

Who deign to honour this my thirtieth year,
And some of you were prophets that I might be
Now that the sun our King is gone, the light
Of these dark hours ; but this new moon, I fear,
Is darkness. Nay, this may be the last time
When I shall hold my birthday in this hall :
I may be outlaw'd, I have heard a rumour.

ALL. God forbid !

ROBIN. Nay, but we have no news of Richard
yet,

And ye did wrong in crying ' Down with John ' ;
For be he dead, then John may be our King.

ALL. God forbid !

ROBIN. Ay God forbid,
But if it be so we must bear with John.
The man is able enough—no lack of wit,
And apt at arms and shrewd in policy.
Courteous enough too when he wills ; and yet
I hate him for his want of chivalry.
He that can pluck the flower of maidenhood
From off the stalk and trample it in the mire,
And boast that he hath trampled it. I hate him,
I hate the man. I may not hate the King
For aught I know,
So that our Barons bring his baseness under.
I think they will be mightier than the king.

[*Dance music.*

(*MARIAN enters with other damsels*)

ROBIN. The high Heaven guard thee from
his wantonness,

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

Who art the fairest flower of maidenhood
That ever blossom'd on this English isle.

MARIAN. Cloud not thy birthday with one
fear for me.

My lord, myself and my good father pray
Thy thirtieth summer may be thirty-fold
As happy as any of those that went before.

ROBIN. My Lady Marian you can make it so
If you will deign to tread a measure with me.

MARIAN. Full willingly, my lord.

[*They dance.*]

ROBIN (*after dance*). My Lady, will you
answer me a question?

MARIAN. Any that you may ask.

ROBIN. A question that every true man asks
of a woman once in his life.

MARIAN. I will not answer it, my lord, till
King Richard come home again.

PRINCE JOHN (*to SHERIFF*). How she looks up
at him, how she holds her face!
Now if she kiss him, I will have his head.

SHERIFF. Peace, my lord; the Earl and Sir
Richard come this way.

ROBIN. Must you have these monies before
the year and the month end?

SIR RICHARD. Or I forfeit my land to the
Abbot. I must pass overseas to one that I trust
will help me.

ROBIN. Leaving your fair Marian alone
here.

SIR RICHARD. Ay, for she hath somewhat of

the lioness in her, and there be men-at-arms to guard her.

[ROBIN, SIR RICHARD, *and* MARIAN *pass on*.

PRINCE JOHN (*to* SHERIFF). Why that will be our opportunity

When I and thou will rob the nest of her.

SHERIFF. Good Prince, art thou in need of any gold?

PRINCE JOHN. Gold? why? not now.

SHERIFF. I would give thee any gold So that myself alone might rob the nest.

PRINCE JOHN. Well, well then, thou shalt rob the nest alone.

SHERIFF. Swear to me by that relic on thy neck.

PRINCE JOHN. I swear then by this relic on my neck—

No, no, I will not swear by this; I keep it For holy vows made to the blessed Saints Not pleasures, women's matters.

Dost thou mistrust me? Am I not thy friend?

Beware, man, lest thou lose thy faith in me.

I love thee much; and as I *am* thy friend,

I promise thee to make this Marian thine.

Go now and ask the maid to dance with thee,

And learn from her if she do love this Earl.

SHERIFF (*advancing toward* MARIAN *and* ROBIN). Pretty mistress?

ROBIN. What art thou, man? Sheriff of Nottingham?

SHERIFF. Ay, my lord. I and my friend,

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

this monk, were here belated, and seeing the hospitable lights in your castle, and knowing the fame of your hospitality, we ventured in uninvited.

ROBIN. You are welcome, though I fear you be of those who hold more by John than Richard.

SHERIFF. True, for through John I had my sheriffship. I am John's till Richard come back again, and then I am Richard's. Pretty mistress, will you dance? [*They dance.*]

ROBIN (*talking to* PRINCE JOHN). What monk of what convent art thou? Why wearest thou thy cowl to hide thy face?

[PRINCE JOHN *shakes his head.*]

Is he deaf, or dumb, or daft, or drunk belike?

[PRINCE JOHN *shakes his head.*]

Why comest thou like a death's head at my feast?

[PRINCE JOHN *points to the* SHERIFF, *who is dancing with* MARIAN.

Is he thy mouthpiece, thine interpreter?

[PRINCE JOHN *nods.*]

SHERIFF (*to* MARIAN *as they pass*). Beware of John!

MARIAN. I hate him.

SHERIFF. Would you cast
An eye of favour on me, I would pay
My brother all his debt and save the land.

MARIAN. I cannot answer thee till Richard come.

SHERIFF. And when he comes?

MARIAN. Well, you must wait till then.

LITTLE JOHN. (*dancing with KATE*). Is it made up? Will you kiss me?

KATE. You shall give me the first kiss.

LITTLE JOHN. There (*kisses her*). Now then.

KATE. You shall wait for mine till Sir Richard has paid the Abbot. [*They pass on.*

[*The SHERIFF leaves MARIAN with her father and comes toward ROBIN.*

ROBIN (*to SHERIFF, PRINCE JOHN standing by*). Sheriff, thy friend, this monk, is but a statue.

SHERIFF. Pardon him, my lord: he is a holy Palmer, bounden by a vow not to show his face, nor to speak word to anyone, till he join King Richard in the Holy Land.

ROBIN. Going to the Holy land to Richard! Give me thy hand and tell him—— Why, what a cold grasp is thine—as if thou didst repent thy courtesy even in the doing it. That is no true man's hand. I hate hidden faces.

SHERIFF. Pardon him again, I pray you; but the twilight of the coming day already glimmers in the east. We thank you, and farewell.

ROBIN. Farewell, farewell. I hate hidden faces. [*Exeunt PRINCE JOHN and SHERIFF.*

SIR RICHARD (*coming forward with MAID MARIAN*). How close the Sheriff peer'd into thine eyes!

What did he say to thee?

MARIAN. Bade me beware
Of John: what maid but would beware of John?

SIR RICHARD. What else?

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

MARIAN. I care not what he said.

SIR RICHARD. What else ?

MARIAN. That if I cast an eye of favour on him,

Himself would pay this mortgage to his brother,
And save the land.

SIR RICHARD. Did he say so, the Sheriff ?

ROBIN. I fear this Abbot is a heart of flint,
Hard as the stones of his abbey.

O good Sir Richard,
I am sorry my exchequer runs so low
I cannot help you in this exigency ;
For though my men and I flash out at times
Of festival like burnish'd summer-flies,
We make but one hour's buzz, are only like
The rainbow of a momentary sun.

I am mortgaged as thyself.

SIR RICHARD. Ay ! I warrant thee—thou
canst not be sorrier than I am. Come away,
daughter.

ROBIN. Farewell, Sir Richard ; farewell, sweet
Marian.

MARIAN. Till better times.

ROBIN. But if the better times should never
come ?

MARIAN. Then I shall be no worse.

ROBIN. And if the worst time come ?

MARIAN. Why then I will be better than
the time.

ROBIN. This ring my mother gave me : it
was her own

Betrothal ring. She pray'd me when I loved
A maid with all my heart to pass it down
A finger of that hand which should be mine
Thereafter. Will you have it? Will you wear
it?

MARIAN. Ay, noble Earl, and never part
with it.

SIR RICHARD LEA (*coming up*). Not till she
clean forget thee, noble Earl.

MARIAN. Forget *him*—never—by this Holy
Cross

Which good King Richard gave me when a
child—

Never!

Not while the swallow skims along the ground,
And while the lark flies up and touches heaven!
Not while the smoke floats from the cottage roof,
And the white cloud is roll'd along the sky!
Not while the rivulet babbles by the door,
And the great breaker beats upon the beach!
Never—

Till Nature, high and low, and great and small
Forgets herself, and all her loves and hates
Sink again into chaos.

SIR RICHARD LEA. Away! away!

[*Exeunt to music.*]

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

SCENE III

SAME AS SCENE II

ROBIN *and his men*

ROBIN. All gone!—my ring—I am happy—
should be happy.

She took my ring. I trust she loves me—yet
I heard this Sheriff tell her he would pay
The mortgage if she favour'd him. I fear
Not her, the father's power upon her.

Friends, (to his men)

I am only merry for an hour or two
Upon a birthday : if this life of ours
Be a good glad thing, why should we make us
merry

Because a year of it is gone? but Hope
Smiles from the threshold of the year to come
Whispering 'it will be happier,' and old faces
Press round us, and warm hands close with warm
hands,

And thro' the blood the wine leaps to the brain
Like April sap to the topmost tree, that shoots
New buds to heaven, whereon the throstle
rock'd

Sings a new song to the new year—and you
Strike up a song, my friends, and then to bed.

LITTLE JOHN. What will you have, my lord?

ROBIN. 'To sleep! to sleep!'

LITTLE JOHN. There is a touch of sadness in
it, my lord,
But ill befitting such a festal day.

ROBIN. I have a touch of sadness in myself.
Sing.

SONG

To sleep ! to sleep ! The long bright day is done,
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.

To sleep ! to sleep !

Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the day ;

Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade away.

To sleep ! to sleep !

Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past be past !

Sleep, happy soul ! all life will sleep at last.

To sleep ! to sleep !

[*A trumpet blown at the gates.*]

ROBIN. Who breaks the stillness of the
morning thus ?

LITTLE JOHN (*going out and returning*). It is a
royal messenger, my lord :
I trust he brings us news of the King's coming.

Enter a PURSUIVANT who reads

O yes, O yes, O yes ! In the name of the
Regent. Thou, Robin Hood Earl of Hunting-
don, art attainted and hast lost thine earldom of
Huntingdon. Moreover thou art dispossessed of
all thy lands, goods, and chattels ; and by virtue
of this writ, whereas Robin Hood Earl of Hunt-
ingdon by force and arms hath trespassed against
the king in divers manners, therefore by the
judgment of the officers of the said lord king,

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

according to the law and custom of the kingdom of England Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon is outlawed and banished.

ROBIN. I have shelter'd some that broke the forest laws.

This is irregular and the work of John.

[*Irregular, irregular ! (tumult)* Down with him, tear his coat from his back !']

MESSENGER. Ho there ! ho there, the Sheriff's men without !

ROBIN. Nay, let them be, man, let them be. We yield.

How should we cope with John ? The London folkmote

Has made him all but king, and he hath seized On half the royal castles. Let him alone ! (*to his men*)

A worthy messenger ! how should he help it ? Shall *we* too work injustice ? what, thou shakest ! Here, here—a cup of wine—drink and begone !

[*Exit* MESSENGER.]

We will away in four-and-twenty hours,
But shall we leave our England ?

TUCK.

Robin, Earl—

ROBIN. Let be the Earl. Henceforth I am no more

Than plain man to plain man.

TUCK.

Well, then, plain man,
There be good fellows there in merry Sherwood
That hold by Richard, tho' they kill his deer.

ROBIN. In Sherwood Forest. I have heard
of them.

Have they no leader ?

TUCK. Each man for his own.
Be thou their leader and they will all of them
Swarm to thy voice like bees to the brass pan.

ROBIN. They hold by Richard—the wild
wood ! to cast

All threadbare household habit, mix with all
The lusty life of wood and underwood,
Hawk, buzzard, jay, the mavis and the merle,
The tawny squirrel vaulting thro' the boughs,
The deer, the highback'd polecat, the wild boar,
The burrowing badger—By St. Nicholas
I have a sudden passion for the wild wood—
We should be free as air in the wild wood—
What say you ? shall we go ? Your hands, your
hands ! *[Gives his hand to each.]*

You, Scarlet, you are always moody here.

SCARLET. 'Tis for no lack of love to you,
my lord,
But lack of happiness in a blatant wife.
She broke my head on Tuesday with a dish.
I would have thwack'd the woman, but I did
not,
Because thou sayest such fine things of women,
But I shall have to thwack her if I stay.

ROBIN. Would it be better for thee in the
wood ?

SCARLET. Ay, so she did not follow me to
the wood.

THE FORESTERS

ACT I

ROBIN. Then, Scarlet, thou at least wilt go
with me.

Thou, Much, the miller's son, I knew thy father :
He was a manly man, as thou art, Much,
And gray before his time as thou art, Much.

MUCH. It is the trick of the family, my lord.
There was a song he made to the turning wheel—

ROBIN. 'Turn ! turn !' but I forget it.

MUCH. I can sing it.

ROBIN. Not now, good Much ! And thou,
dear Little John,
Who hast that worship for me which Heaven
knows

I ill deserve—you love me, all of you,
But I am outlaw'd, and if caught, I die.
Your hands again. All thanks for all your
service ;

But if you follow me, you may die with me.

ALL. We will live and die with thee, we
will live and die with thee.

ACT II

THE FLIGHT OF MARIAN

SCENE I.—A BROAD FOREST GLADE, WOODMAN'S HUT AT ONE SIDE WITH HALF-DOOR. FORESTERS ARE LOOKING TO THEIR BOWS AND ARROWS, OR POLISHING THEIR SWORDS.

FORESTERS *sing (as they disperse to their work)*

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no hearts like English hearts
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no men like Englishmen
So tall and bold as they be.

(Full chorus.) And these will strike for England
And man and maid be free
To foil and spoil the tyrant
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no wives like English wives
So fair and chaste as they be.

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no maids like English maids
So beautiful as they be.

(Full chorus.) And these shall wed with freemen,
And all their sons be free,
To sing the songs of England
Beneath the greenwood tree.

ROBIN (*alone*). My lonely hour !
The king of day hath stept from off his throne,
Flung by the golden mantle of the cloud,
And sets, a naked fire. The King of England
Perchance this day may sink as gloriously,
Red with his own and enemy's blood—but no !
We hear he is in prison. It is my birthday.
I have reign'd one year in the wild wood. My
mother,
For whose sake, and the blessed Queen of Heaven,
I reverence all women, bad me, dying,
Whene'er this day should come about, to carve
One lone hour from it, so to meditate
Upon my greater nearness to the birthday
Of the after-life, when all the sheeted dead
Are shaken from their stillness in the grave
By the last trumpet.

Am I worse or better ?

I am outlaw'd. I am none the worse for that.
I held for Richard, and I hated John.
I am a thief, ay, and a king of thieves.
Ay ! but we rob the robber, wrong the wronger,
And what we wring from them we give the poor.
I am none the worse for that, and all the better

For this free forest-life, for while I sat
Among my thralls in my baronial hall
The groining hid the heavens ; but since I
 breathed,
A houseless head beneath the sun and stars,
The soul of the woods hath stricken thro' my
 blood,
The love of freedom, the desire of God,
The hope of larger life hereafter, more
Tenfold than under roof. *[Horn blown.]*

True, were I taken
They would prick out my sight. A price is set
On this poor head ; but I believe there lives
No man who truly loves and truly rules
His following, but can keep his followers true.
I am one with mine. Traitors are rarely bred
Save under traitor kings. Our vice-king John,
True king of vice—true play on words—our John
By his Norman arrogance and dissoluteness,
Hath made *me* king of all the discontent
Of England up thro' all the forest land
North to the Tyne : being outlaw'd in a land
Where law lies dead, we make ourselves the law.
Why break you thus upon my lonely hour ?

Enter LITTLE JOHN and KATE

LITTLE JOHN. I found this white doe wander-
 ing thro' the wood,
Not thine, but mine. I have shot her thro' the
 heart.

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

KATE. He lies, my lord. I have shot *him*
thro' the heart.

ROBIN. My God, thou art the very woman
who waits

On my dear Marian. Tell me, tell me of her.
Thou comest a very angel out of heaven.
Where is she? and how fares she?

KATE. O my good lord,
I am but an angel by reflected light.
Your heaven is vacant of your angel. John—
Shame on him!—

Stole on her, she was walking in the garden,
And after some slight speech about the Sheriff
He caught her round the waist, whereon she
struck him,

And fled into the castle. She and Sir Richard
Have past away, I know not where; and I
Was left alone, and knowing as I did
That I had shot him thro' the heart, I came
To eat him up and make an end of him.

LITTLE JOHN. In kisses?

KATE. You, how dare you mention kisses?
But I am weary pacing thro' the wood.
Show me some cave or cabin where I may rest.

ROBIN. Go with him. I will talk with thee
anon. [*Exeunt* LITTLE JOHN and KATE.
She struck him, my brave Marian, struck the
Prince,

The serpent that had crept into the garden
And coil'd himself about her sacred waist.
I think I should have stricken him to the death.

He never will forgive her.

O the Sheriff

Would pay this cursed mortgage to his brother
If Marian would marry him ; and the son
Is most like dead—if so the land may come
To Marian, and they rate the land five-fold
The worth of the mortgage, and who marries her
Marries the land. Most honourable Sheriff !
(*Passionately*) Gone, and it may be gone for ever-
more !

O would that I could see her for a moment
Glide like a light across these woodland ways !
Tho' in one moment she should glance away,
I should be happier for it all the year.
O would she moved beside me like my shadow !
O would she stood before me as my queen,
To make this Sherwood Eden o'er again,
And these rough oaks the palms of Paradise !

Ah ! but who be those three yonder with
bows ?—not of my band—the Sheriff, and by
heaven, Prince John himself and one of those
mercenaries that suck the blood of England.
My people are all scattered I know not where.
Have they come for me ? Here is the witch's
hut. The fool-people call her a witch—a good
witch to me ! I will shelter here.

[*Knocks at the door of the hut.*]

OLD WOMAN *comes out*

OLD WOMAN (*kisses his hand*). Ah dear Robin !
ah noble captain, friend of the poor !

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

ROBIN. I am chased by my foes. I have forgotten my horn that calls my men together. Disguise me—thy gown and thy coif.

OLD WOMAN. Come in, come in; I would give my life for thee, for when the Sheriff had taken all our goods for the King without paying, our horse and our little cart——

ROBIN. Quick, good mother, quick!

OLD WOMAN. Ay, ay, gown, coif, and petticoat, and the old woman's blessing with them to the last fringe. *[They go in.]*

Enter PRINCE JOHN, SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM,
and MERCENARY

PRINCE JOHN. Did we not hear the two would pass this way?
They must have past. Here is a woodman's hut.

MERCENARY. Take heed, take heed! in Nottingham they say
There bides a foul witch somewhere hereabout.

SHERIFF. Not in this hut I take it.

PRINCE JOHN. Why not here?

SHERIFF. I saw a man go in, my lord.

PRINCE JOHN. Not two?

SHERIFF. No, my lord, one.

PRINCE JOHN. Make for the cottage then!

THE FORESTERS

Interior of the hut

ROBIN *disguised as old woman*

PRINCE JOHN (*without*). Knock again ! knock again !

ROBIN (*to OLD WOMAN*). Get thee into the closet there, and make a ghostly wail ever and anon to scare 'em.

OLD WOMAN. I will, I will, good Robin.

[*Goes into closet.*]

PRINCE JOHN (*without*). Open, open, or I will drive the door from the door-post.

ROBIN (*opens door*). Come in, come in.

PRINCE JOHN. Why did ye keep us at the door so long ?

ROBIN (*curtseying*). I was afear'd it was the ghost, your worship.

PRINCE JOHN. Ghost ! did one in white pass ?

ROBIN (*curtseying*). No, your worship.

PRINCE JOHN. Did two knights pass ?

ROBIN (*curtseying*). No, your worship.

SHERIFF. I fear me we have lost our labour, then.

PRINCE JOHN. Except this old hag have been bribed to lie.

ROBIN. We old hags should be bribed to speak truth, for, God help us, we lie by nature.

PRINCE JOHN. There was a man just now that enter'd here ?

ROBIN. There is but one old woman in the hut.

[OLD WOMAN *yells.*]

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

ROBIN. I crave your worship's pardon. There is yet another old woman. She was murdered here a hundred year ago, and whenever a murder is to be done again she yells out i' this way—so they say, your worship.

MERCENARY. Now, if I hadn't a sprig o' wickentree sewn into my dress, I should run.

PRINCE JOHN. Tut ! tut ! the scream of some wild woodland thing.

How came we to be parted from our men ?
We shouted, and *they* shouted, as I thought,
But shout and echo play'd into each other
So hollowly we knew not which was which.

ROBIN. The wood is full of echoes, owls, elfs, ouphes, oafs, ghosts o' the mist, wills-o'-the-wisp ; only they that be bred in it can find their way a-nights in it.

PRINCE JOHN. I am footsore and famish'd therewithal.

Is there aught there ? *[Pointing to cupboard.]*

ROBIN. Naught for the likes o' you.

PRINCE JOHN. Speak straight out, crookback.

ROBIN. Sour milk and black bread.

PRINCE JOHN. Well, set them forth. I could eat anything.

[He sets out a table with black bread.]

This is mere marble. Old hag, how should thy one tooth drill thro' this ?

ROBIN. Nay, by St. Gemini, I ha' two ; and since the Sheriff left me naught but an empty belly, they can meet upon anything thro' a mill-

stone. You gentles that live upo' manchet-bread and marchpane, what should you know o' the food o' the poor? Look you here, before you can eat it you must hack it with a hatchet, break it all to pieces, as you break the poor, as you would hack at Robin Hood if you could light upon him (*hacks it and flings two pieces*). There's for you, and there's for you—and the old woman's welcome.

PRINCE JOHN. The old wretch is mad, and her bread is beyond me : and the milk—faugh ! Hast thou anything to sweeten this ?

ROBIN. Here's a pot o' wild honey from an old oak, saving your sweet reverences.

SHERIFF. Thou hast a cow then, hast thou ?

ROBIN. Ay, for when the Sheriff took my little horse for the King without paying for it——

SHERIFF. How hadst thou then the means to buy a cow ?

ROBIN. Eh, I would ha' given my whole body to the King had *he* asked for it, like the woman at Acre when the Turk shot her as she was helping to build the mound against the city. I ha' served the King living, says she, and let me serve him dead, says she ; let me go to make the mound : bury me in the mound, says the woman.

SHERIFF. Ay, but the cow ?

ROBIN. She was given me.

SHERIFF. By whom ?

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

ROBIN. By a thief.

SHERIFF. Who, woman, who ?

ROBIN (*sings*).

He was a forester good ;
He was the cock o' the walk ;
He was the king o' the wood.

Your worship may find another rhyme if you care to drag your brains for such a minnow.

SHERIFF. That cow was mine. I have lost a cow from my meadow. Robin Hood was it ? I thought as much. He will come to the gibbet at last.

[OLD WOMAN *yells*.

MERCENARY. O sweet sir, talk not of cows. You anger the spirit.

PRINCE JOHN. Anger the scritch-owl.

MERCENARY. But, my lord, the scritch-owl bodes death, my lord.

ROBIN. I beseech you all to speak lower. Robin may be hard by wi' three-score of his men. He often looks in here by the moonshine. Beware of Robin.

[OLD WOMAN *yells*.

MERCENARY. Ay, do you hear ? There may be murder done.

SHERIFF. Have you not finished, my lord ?

ROBIN. Thou hast crost him in love, and I have heard him swear he will be even wi' thee.

[OLD WOMAN *yells*.

MERCENARY. Now is my heart so down in my heels that if I stay, I can't run.

SHERIFF. Shall we not go ?

ROBIN. And, old hag tho' I be, I can spell

the hand. Give me thine. Ay, ay, the line o' life is marked enow ; but look, there is a cross line o' sudden death. I pray thee go, go, for tho' thou wouldst bar me fro' the milk o' my cow, I wouldn't have thy blood on my hearth.

PRINCE JOHN. Why do you listen, man, to the old fool ?

SHERIFF. I will give thee a silver penny if thou wilt show us the way back to Nottingham.

ROBIN (*with a very low curtsey*). All the sweet saints bless your worship for your alms to the old woman ! but make haste then, and be silent in the wood. Follow me. [*Takes his bow.*]

(*They come out of the hut and close the door carefully*)

Outside hut

ROBIN. Softly ! softly ! there may be a thief in every bush.

PRINCE JOHN. How should this old lamester guide us ? Where is thy goodman ?

ROBIN. The saints were so kind to both on us that he was dead before he was born.

PRINCE JOHN. Half-witted and a witch to boot ! Mislead us, and I will have thy life ! and what doest thou with that who art more bow-bent than the very bow thou carriest ?

ROBIN. I keep it to kill nightingales.

PRINCE JOHN. Nightingales !

ROBIN. You see, they are so fond o' their

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

own voices that I cannot sleep o' nights by cause on 'em.

PRINCE JOHN. True soul of the Saxon churl for whom song has no charm.

ROBIN. Then I roast 'em, for I have nought else to live on (*whines*). O your honour, I pray you too to give me an alms. (*To PRINCE JOHN.*)

SHERIFF. This is no bow to hit nightingales ; this is a true woodman's bow of the best yew-wood to slay the deer. Look, my lord, there goes one in the moonlight. Shoot !

PRINCE JOHN (*shoots*). Missed ! There goes another. Shoot, Sheriff !

SHERIFF (*shoots*). Missed !

ROBIN. And here comes another. Why, an old woman can shoot closer than you two.

PRINCE JOHN. Shoot then, and if thou miss I will fasten thee to thine own door-post and make thine old carcase a target for us three.

ROBIN (*raises himself upright, shoots, and hits*). Hit ! Did I not tell you an old woman could shoot better ?

PRINCE JOHN. Thou standest straight. Thou speakest manlike. Thou art no old woman—thou art disguised—thou art one of the thieves.

[*Makes a clutch at the gown, which comes in pieces and falls, showing ROBIN in his forester's dress.*]

SHERIFF. It is the very captain of the thieves !

PRINCE JOHN. We have him at last ; we have

him at advantage. Strike, Sheriff! Strike, mercenary!

[They draw swords and attack him; he defends himself with his.]

Enter LITTLE JOHN

LITTLE JOHN. I have lodged my pretty Katekin in her bower.

How now? Clashing of swords—three upon one, and that one our Robin! Rogues, have you no manhood? *[Draws and defends* ROBIN.

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (*draws his sword*)

SIR RICHARD LEA. Old as I am, I will not brook to see

Three upon two.

[MAID MARIAN in the armour of a Redcross Knight follows, half unsheathing her sword and half-seen.]

Back! back! I charge thee, back! Is this a game for thee to play at? Away.

[She retires to the fringe of the copse. He fights on ROBIN's side. The other three are beaten off and exeunt.]

Enter FRIAR TUCK

FRIAR TUCK. I am too late then with my quarterstaff!

ROBIN. Quick, friar, follow them: See whether there be more of 'em in the wood.

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

FRIAR TUCK. On the gallop, on the gallop, Robin, like a deer from a dog, or a colt from a gad-fly, or a stump-tailed ox in May-time, or the cow that jumped over the moon. [*Exit.*]

ROBIN. Nay, nay, but softly, lest they spy thee, friar !

[*To SIR RICHARD LEA who reels.*]

Take thou mine arm. Who art thou, gallant knight ?

SIR RICHARD. Robin, I am Sir Richard of the Lea.

Who be those three that I have fought withal ?

ROBIN. Prince John, the Sheriff, and a mercenary.

SIR RICHARD. Prince John again. We are flying from this John.

The Sheriff—I am grieved it was the Sheriff ; For, Robin, he must be my son-in-law.

Thou art an outlaw, and couldst never pay The mortgage on my land. Thou wilt not see

My Marian more. So—so—I have presumed Beyond my strength. Give me a draught of wine.

[*MARIAN comes forward.*]

This is my son but late escaped from prison, For whom I ran into my debt to the Abbot, Two thousand marks in gold. I have paid him half.

That other thousand—shall I ever pay it ? A draught of wine.

ROBIN. Our cellar is hard by.

Take him, good Little John, and give him wine.

[*Exit SIR RICHARD leaning on LITTLE JOHN.*]

A brave old fellow but he angers me.

[*To MAID MARIAN who is following her father.*]

Young Walter, nay, I pray thee, stay a moment.

MARIAN. A moment for some matter of no moment !

Well—take and use your moment, while you may.

ROBIN. Thou art her brother, and her voice is thine,

Her face is thine, and if thou be as gentle

Give me some news of my sweet Marian.

Where is she ?

MARIAN. Thy sweet Marian ? I believe
She came with me into the forest here.

ROBIN. She follow'd thee into the forest
here ?

MARIAN. Nay—that, my friend, I am sure I
did not say.

ROBIN. Thou blowest hot and cold. Where
is she then ?

MARIAN. Is she not here with thee ?

ROBIN. Would God she were !

MARIAN. If not with thee I know not where
she is.

She may have lighted on your fairies here,
And now be skipping in their fairy-rings,
And capering hand in hand with Oberon.

ROBIN.

Peace !

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

MARIAN. Or learning witchcraft of your
woodland witch,

And how to charm and waste the hearts of men.

ROBIN. That is not brother-like.

MARIAN (*pointing to the sky*). Or there perchance

Up yonder with the man i' the moon.

ROBIN. No more !

MARIAN. Or haply fallen a victim to the
wolf.

ROBIN. Tut ! be there wolves in Sherwood ?

MARIAN. The wolf, John !

ROBIN. Curse him ! but thou art mocking
me. Thou art

Her brother—I forgive thee. Come be thou
My brother too. She loves me.

MARIAN. Doth she so ?

ROBIN. Do you doubt me when I say she
loves me, man ?

MARIAN. No, but my father will not lose
his land,

Rather than that would wed her with the Sheriff.

ROBIN. Thou hold'st with him ?

MARIAN. Yes, in some sort I do.

He is old and almost mad to keep the land.

ROBIN. Thou hold'st with him ?

MARIAN. I tell thee, in some sort.

ROBIN (*angrily*). Sort ! sort ! what sort ?
what sort of man art thou

For land, not love ? Thou wilt inherit the land,
And so wouldst sell thy sister to the Sheriff,

O thou unworthy brother of my dear Marian !
And now, I do bethink me, thou wast by
And never drewest sword to help the old man
When he was fighting.

MARIAN. There were three to three.

ROBIN. Thou shouldst have ta'en his place,
and fought for him.

MARIAN. He did it so well there was no call
for me.

ROBIN. My God !

That such a brother—*she* marry the Sheriff !
Come now, I fain would have a bout with thee.
It is but pastime—nay, I will not harm thee.
Draw !

MARIAN. Earl, I would fight with any man
but thee.

ROBIN. Ay, ay, because I have a name for
prowess.

MARIAN. It is not that.

ROBIN. That ! I believe thou fell'st into the
hands

Of these same Moors thro' nature's baseness,
criedst

'I yield' almost before the thing was ask'd,
And thro' thy lack of manhood hast betray'd
Thy father to the losing of his land.

Come, boy ! 'tis but to see if thou canst fence.

Draw ! [Draws.]

MARIAN. No, Sir Earl, I will not fight to-day.

ROBIN. To-morrow then ?

MARIAN. Well, I will fight to-morrow.

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

ROBIN. Give me thy glove upon it.

MARIAN (*pulls off her glove and gives it to him*).

There !

ROBIN.

O God !

What sparkles in the moonlight on thy hand ?

[*Takes her hand.*

In that great heat to wed her to the Sheriff
Thou hast robb'd my girl of her betrothal ring.

MARIAN. No, no !

ROBIN. What ! do I not know mine own
ring ?

MARIAN. I keep it for her.

ROBIN. Nay, she swore it never
Should leave her finger. Give it me, by heaven,
Or I will force it from thee.

MARIAN. O Robin, Robin !

ROBIN. O my dear Marian,
Is it thou ? is it thou ? I fall before thee, clasp
Thy knees. I am ashamed. Thou shalt not
marry

The Sheriff, but abide with me who love thee.

[*She moves from him, the moonlight falls upon her.*

O look ! before the shadow of these dark oaks
Thou seem'st a saintly splendour out from heaven,
Clothed with the mystic silver of her moon.
Speak but one word not only of forgiveness,
But to show thou art mortal.

MARIAN. Mortal enough,
If love for thee be mortal. Lovers hold
True love immortal. Robin, tho' I love thee,

We cannot come together in this world.
Not mortal ! after death, if after death——

ROBIN (*springing up*). Life, life. I know not
death. Why do you vex me
With raven-croaks of death and after death ?

MARIAN. And I and he are passing overseas :
He has a friend there will advance the monies,
So now the forest lawns are all as bright
As ways to heaven, I pray thee give us guides
To lead us thro' the windings of the wood.

ROBIN. Must it be so ? If it were so, myself
Would guide you thro' the forest to the sea.
But go not yet, stay with us, and when thy
brother——

MARIAN. Robin, I ever held that saying false
That Love is blind, but thou hast proven it true.
Why—even your woodland squirrel sees the nut
Behind the shell, and thee however mask'd
I should have known. But thou—to dream that he
My brother, my dear Walter—now, perhaps,
Fetter'd and lash'd, a galley-slave, or closed
For ever in a Moorish tower, or wreckt
And dead beneath the midland ocean, he
As gentle as he's brave—that such as he
Would wrest from me the precious ring I promised
Never to part with—No, not he, nor any.
I would have battled for it to the death.

[*In her excitement she draws her sword.*]

See, thou hast wrong'd my brother and myself.

ROBIN (*kneeling*). See then, I kneel once more
to be forgiven.

ACT II

SCARLET. Look ! look ! he kneels ! he has
 anger'd the foul witch,
 Who melts a waxen image by the fire,
 And drains the heart and marrow from a man.

Seize on the knight ! wrench his sword from him !
[They all rush on MARIAN.

Back all of you ! this is Maid Marian
Flying from John—disguised.

SCARLET. Captain, we saw thee cowering to
a knight

MARIAN. You dared to dream

Robin—I know not, can I trust myself

With your brave band? in some of these may
lodge

That baseness which for fear or monies, might
Betray me to the wild Prince.

ROBIN. No, love, no !
Not any of these, I swear.

MEN. No, no, we swear.

SCENE II

ANOTHER GLADE IN THE FOREST

ROBIN *and* MARIAN *passing**Enter* FORESTER

FORESTER. Knight, your good father had his
draught of wine
And then he swoon'd away. He had been hurt,
And bled beneath his armour. Now he cries
'The land ! the land !' Come to him.

MARIAN. O my poor father !

ROBIN. Stay with us in this wood, till he
recover.

We know all balms and simples of the field
To help a wound. Stay with us here, sweet
love,

Maid Marian, till thou wed what man thou wilt.
All here will prize thee, honour, worship thee,

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

Crown thee with flowers ; and he will soon be
well :

All will be well.

MARIAN. O lead me to my father !

[*As they are going out enter LITTLE JOHN and
KATE who falls on the neck of MARIAN.*]

KATE. No, no, false knight, thou canst not
hide thyself

From her who loves thee.

LITTLE JOHN. What !

By all the devils in and out of Hell !

Wilt thou embrace thy sweetheart 'fore my
face ?

Quick with thy sword ! the yeoman braves the
knight.

There ! (*strikes her with the flat of his sword*).

MARIAN (*laying about her*). Are the men all
mad ? there then, and there !

KATE. O hold thy hand ! this is our Marian.

LITTLE JOHN. What ! with this skill of
fence ! let go mine arm.

ROBIN. Down with thy sword ! She is my
queen and thine,

The mistress of the band.

MARIAN (*sheathing her sword*). A maiden now
Were ill-bested in these dark days of John,
Except she could defend her innocence.
O lead me to my father.

[*Exeunt ROBIN and MARIAN.*]

LITTLE JOHN. Speak to me,
I am like a boy now going to be whipt ;

I know I have done amiss, have been a fool.
Speak to me, Kate, and say you pardon me !

KATE. I never will speak word to thee again.
What ? to mistrust the girl you say you love
Is to mistrust your own love for your girl !
How should you love if you mistrust your love ?

LITTLE JOHN. O Kate, true love and jealousy
are twins,
And love is joyful, innocent, beautiful,
And jealousy is wither'd, sour and ugly :
Yet are they twins and always go together.

KATE. Well, well, until they cease to go
together,
I am but a stone and a dead stock to thee.

LITTLE JOHN. I thought I saw thee clasp and
kiss a man
And it was but a woman. Pardon me.

KATE. Ay, for I much disdain thee, but if
ever
Thou see me clasp and kiss a man indeed,
I will again be thine, and not till then. [*Exit.*

LITTLE JOHN. I have been a fool and I have
lost my Kate. [*Exit.*

Re-enter ROBIN

ROBIN. He dozes. I have left her watching
him.
She will not marry till her father yield.
The old man dotes.
Nay—and she will not marry till Richard come,

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

And that's at latter Lammas—never perhaps.
 Besides, tho' Friar Tuck might make us one,
 An outlaw's bride may not be wife in law.
 I am weary. *[Lying down on a bank.*
 What's here? a dead bat in the fairy ring—
 Yes, I remember, Scarlet hacking down
 A hollow ash, a bat flew out at him
 In the clear noon, and hook'd him by the hair,
 And he was scared and slew it. My men say
 The fairies haunt this glade ;—if one could catch
 A glimpse of them and of their fairy Queen—
 Have our loud pastimes driven them all away?
 I never saw them : yet I could believe
 There came some evil fairy at my birth
 And cursed me, as the last heir of my race :
 ' This boy will never wed the maid he loves,
 Nor leave a child behind him ' *(yawns)*. Weary
 —weary
 As tho' a spell were on me *(he dreams)*.

*[The whole stage lights up, and fairies are seen
 swinging on boughs and nestling in hollow
 trunks.]*

TITANIA *on a hill*, FAIRIES *on either side of her*,
the moon above the hill

FIRST FAIRY

Evil fairy ! do you hear?
 So he said who lieth here.

THE FORESTERS

SECOND FAIRY

We be fairies of the wood,
We be neither bad nor good.

FIRST FAIRY

Back and side and hip and rib,
Nip, nip him for his fib.

TITANIA

Nip him not, but let him snore.
We must flit for evermore.

FIRST FAIRY

Tit, my queen, must it be so ?
Wherefore, wherefore should we go ?

TITANIA

I Titania bid you flit,
And you dare to call me Tit.

FIRST FAIRY

Tit, for love and brevity,
Not for love of levity.

TITANIA

Pertest of our flickering mob,
Wouldst thou call my Oberon Ob ?

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

FIRST FAIRY

Nay, an please your Elfin Grace,
Never Ob before his face.

TITANIA

Fairy realm is breaking down
When the fairy slights the crown.

FIRST FAIRY

No, by wisp and glowworm, no.
Only wherefore should we go?

TITANIA

We must fly from Robin Hood
And this new queen of the wood.

FIRST FAIRY

True, she is a goodly thing.
Jealousy, jealousy of the king.

TITANIA

Nay, for Oberon fled away
Twenty thousand leagues to-day.

CHORUS

Look, there comes a deputation
From our finikin fairy nation.

THE FORESTERS

Enter several FAIRIES

THIRD FAIRY

Crush'd my bat whereon I flew !
Found him dead and drench'd in dew,
Queen.

FOURTH FAIRY

Quash'd my frog that used to quack
When I vaulted on his back,
Queen.

FIFTH FAIRY

Kill'd the sward where'er they sat,
Queen.

SIXTH FAIRY

Lusty bracken beaten flat,
Queen.

SEVENTH FAIRY

Honest daisy deadly bruised,
Queen.

EIGHTH FAIRY

Modest maiden lily abused,
Queen.

THE FORESTERS

ACT II

NINTH FAIRY

Beetle's jewel armour crack'd,
Queen.

TENTH FAIRY

Reed I rock'd upon broken-back'd,
Queen.

FAIRIES (*in chorus*)

We be scared with song and shout.
Arrows whistle all about.
All our games be put to rout.
All our rings be trampled out.
Lead us thou to some deep glen,
Far from solid foot of men,
Never to return again,
Queen.

TITANIA (*to* FIRST FAIRY)

Elf, with spiteful heart and eye,
Talk of jealousy? You see why
We must leave the wood and fly.

(*To all the FAIRIES, who sing at intervals
with TITANIA*)

Up with you, out of the forest and over the hills
and away,

And over this Robin Hood's bay !
Up thro' the light of the seas by the moon's
 long-silvering ray !
To a land where the fay,
Not an eye to survey,
In the night, in the day,
Can have frolic and play.
Up with you, all of you, out of it ! hear and
 obey.
Man, lying here alone,
Moody creature,
Of a nature
Stronger, sadder than my own,
Were I human, were I human,
I could love you like a woman.
Man, man,
You shall wed your Marian.
She is true, and you are true,
And you love her and she loves you ;
Both be happy, and adieu for ever and for ever-
 more—adieu.
ROBIN (*half waking*). Shall I be happy ?
Happy vision, stay.

TITANIA

Up with you, all of you, off with you, out of it,
 over the wood and away !

Note.—In the stage copy of my play I have had this Fairy Scene transferred to the end of the Third Act, for the sake of modern dramatic effect.

ACT III

THE CROWNING OF MARIAN

SCENE.—HEART OF THE FOREST

MARIAN *and* KATE (*in Foresters' green*)

KATE. What makes you seem so cold to Robin, lady?

MARIAN. What makes thee think I seem so cold to Robin?

KATE. You never whisper close as lovers do, Nor care to leap into each other's arms.

MARIAN. There is a fence I cannot overleap, My father's will.

KATE. Then you will wed the Sheriff?

MARIAN. When heaven falls, I may light on such a lark!

But who art thou to catechize me—thou That hast not made it up with Little John!

KATE. I wait till Little John makes up to *me*.

MARIAN. Why, my good Robin fancied me a man,

And drew his sword upon me, and Little John
Fancied he saw thee clasp and kiss a man.

KATE. Well, if *he* fancied that *I* fancy a man
Other than *him*, he is *not* the man for me.

MARIAN. And that would quite *unman* him,
heart and soul.

For both are thine. (*Looking up.*)

But listen—overhead—
Fluting, and piping and luting ‘Love, love,
love’—

Those sweet tree-Cupids half-way up in heaven,
The birds—would I were one of ‘em ! O good
Kate—

If my man-Robin were but a bird-Robin,
How happily would we lilt among the leaves
‘Love, love, love, love’—what merry madness—
listen !

And let them warm thy heart to Little John.
Look where he comes !

KATE. I will not meet him yet,
I’ll watch him from behind the trees, but call
Kate when you will, for I am close at hand.

KATE *stands aside and enter* ROBIN, *and after him at a
little distance* LITTLE JOHN, *Much the Miller’s
son, and* SCARLET *with an oaken chaplet, and other*
FORESTERS.

LITTLE JOHN. My lord—Robin—I crave
pardon—you always seem to me my lord—I
Little John, he Much the miller’s son, and he

Scarlet, honouring all womankind, and more especially my lady Marian, do here, in the name of all our woodmen, present her with this oaken chaplet as Queen of the wood, I Little John, he, young Scarlet, and he, old Much, and all the rest of us.

MUCH. And I, old Much, say as much, for being every inch a man I honour every inch of a woman.

ROBIN. Friend Scarlet, art thou less a man than Much?

Why art thou mute? Dost thou not honour woman?

SCARLET. Robin, I do, but I have a bad wife.

ROBIN. Then let her pass as an exception, Scarlet.

SCARLET. So I would, Robin, if any man would accept her.

MARIAN (*puts on the chaplet*). Had I a bulrush now in this right hand

For sceptre, I were like a queen indeed.

Comrades, I thank you for your loyalty,

And take and wear this symbol of your love ;

And were my kindly father sound again,

Could live as happy as the larks in heaven,

And join your feasts and all your forest games

As far as maiden might. Farewell, good fellows !

[*Exeunt several FORESTERS, the others withdraw to the back.*]

ROBIN. Sit here by me, where the most beaten track

Runs thro' the forest, hundreds of huge oaks,
Gnarl'd—older than the thrones of Europe—
look,

What breadth, height, strength — torrents of
eddying bark !

Some hollow-hearted from exceeding age—
That never be thy lot or mine !—and some
Pillaring a leaf-sky on their monstrous boles,
Sound at the core as we are. Fifty leagues
Of woodland hear and know my horn, that scares
The Baron at the torture of his churls,
The pillage of his vassals.

O maiden-wife,
The oppression of our people moves me so,
That when I think of it hotly, Love himself
Seems but a ghost, but when thou feel'st with me
The ghost returns to Marian, clothes itself
In maiden flesh and blood, and looks at once
Maid Marian, and that maiden freedom which
Would never brook the tyrant. Live thou
maiden !

Thou art more my wife so feeling, than if my
wife

And siding with these proud priests, and these
Barons,

Devils, that make this blessed England hell.

MARIAN. Earl——

ROBIN. Nay, no Earl am I. I am English
yeoman.

MARIAN. Then *I* am yeo-woman. O the
clumsy word !

THE FORESTERS

ACT III

ROBIN. Take thou this light kiss for thy clumsy word.

Kiss me again.

MARIAN. Robin, I will not kiss thee,
For that belongs to marriage ; but I hold thee
The husband of my heart, the noblest light
That ever flash'd across my life, and I
Embrace thee with the kisses of the soul.

ROBIN. I thank thee.

MARIAN. Scarlet told me—is it true?—
That John last week return'd to Nottingham,
And all the foolish world is pressing thither.

ROBIN. Sit here, my queen, and judge the world with me.

Doubtless, like judges of another bench,
However wise, we must at times have wrought
Some great injustice, yet, far as we knew,
We never robb'd one friend of the true King.
We robb'd the traitors that are leagued with
John ;

We robb'd the lawyer who went against the law ;
We spared the craftsman, chapman, all that live
By their own hands, the labourer, the poor
priest ;

We spoil'd the prior, friar, abbot, monk,
For playing upside down with Holy Writ.
'Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor' ;
Take all they have and give it to thyself !
Then after we have eased them of their coins
It is our forest custom they should revel
Along with Robin.

MARIAN. And if a woman pass——

ROBIN. Dear, in these days of Norman license,
when

Our English maidens are their prey, if ever
A Norman damsel fell into our hands,
In this dark wood when all was in our power
We never wrong'd a woman.

MARIAN. Noble Robin.

LITTLE JOHN (*coming forward*). Here come
three beggars.

Enter the three BEGGARS

LITTLE JOHN. Toll!

FIRST BEGGAR. Eh! we be beggars, we
come to ask o' you. We ha' nothing.

SECOND BEGGAR. Rags, nothing but our
rags.

THIRD BEGGAR. I have but one penny in
pouch, and so you would make it two I should
be grateful.

MARIAN. Beggars, you are sturdy rogues
that should be set to work. You are those that
tramp the country, filch the linen from the
hawthorn, poison the house-dog, and scare
lonely maidens at the farmstead. Search them,
Little John.

LITTLE JOHN. These two have forty gold
marks between them, Robin.

ROBIN. Cast them into our treasury, the
beggars' mites. Part shall go to the almshouses

THE FORESTERS

ACT III

at Nottingham, part to the shrine of our Lady. Search this other.

LITTLE JOHN. He hath, as he said, but one penny.

ROBIN. Leave it with him and add a gold mark thereto. He hath spoken truth in a world of lies.

THIRD BEGGAR. I thank you, my lord.

LITTLE JOHN. A fine, a fine ! he hath called plain Robin a lord. How much for a beggar ?

ROBIN. Take his penny and leave him his gold mark.

LITTLE JOHN. Sit there, knaves, till the captain call for you.

[They pass behind the trunk of an oak on the right.]

MARIAN. Art thou not hard upon them, my good Robin ?

ROBIN. They might be harder upon thee, if met in a black lane at midnight : the throat might gape before the tongue could cry who ?

LITTLE JOHN. Here comes a citizen, and I think his wife.

Enter CITIZEN and WIFE

CITIZEN. That business which we have in Nottingham——

LITTLE JOHN. Halt !

CITIZEN. O dear wife, we have fallen into
the hands
Of Robin Hood.

MARIAN. And Robin Hood hath sworn—
Shame on thee, Little John, thou hast forgotten—
That by the blessed Mother no man, so
His own true wife came with him, should be
stay'd

From passing onward. Fare you well, fair lady !

[*Bowing to her.*]

ROBIN. And may your business thrive in
Nottingham !

CITIZEN. I thank you, noble sir, the very
blossom
Of bandits. Curtsey to him, wife, and thank
him.

WIFE. I thank you, noble sir, and will pray
for you
That *you* may thrive, but in some kindlier
trade.

CITIZEN. Away, away, wife, wilt thou anger
him ?

[*Exeunt CITIZEN and his WIFE.*]

LITTLE JOHN. Here come three friars.

ROBIN. Marian, thou and thy woman (*looking
round*),

Why, where is Kate ?

MARIAN (*calling*). Kate !

KATE. Here !

ROBIN. Thou and thy woman are a match
for three friars. Take thou my bow and arrow
and compel them to pay toll.

MARIAN. Toll !

THE FORESTERS

ACT III

Enter three FRIARS

FIRST FRIAR (*advancing*). Behold a pretty
Dian of the wood,
Prettier than that same widow which you wot of.
Ha, brother. Toll, my dear? the toll of love.

MARIAN (*drawing bow*). Back! how much
money hast thou in thy purse?

FIRST FRIAR. Thou art playing with us.
How should poor friars have money?

MARIAN. How much? how much? Speak,
or the arrow flies.

FIRST FRIAR. How much? well, now I
bethink me, I have one mark in gold which a
pious son of the Church gave me this morning
on my setting forth.

MARIAN (*bending bow at the second*). And
thou?

SECOND FRIAR. Well, as he said, one mark in
gold.

MARIAN (*bending bow at the third*). And thou?

THIRD FRIAR. One mark in gold.

MARIAN. Search them, Kate, and see if they
have spoken truth.

KATE. They are all mark'd men. They
have told but a tenth of the truth: they have
each ten marks in gold.

MARIAN. Leave them each what they say is
theirs, and take the twenty-seven marks to the
captain's treasury. Sit there till you be called
for.

FIRST FRIAR. We have fall'n into the hands
of Robin Hood.

[*MARIAN and KATE return to ROBIN.*
[*The FRIARS pass behind an oak on the left.*

ROBIN. Honour to thee, brave Marian, and
thy Kate.

I know them arrant knaves in Nottingham.
One half of this shall go to those they have
wrong'd,
One half shall pass into our treasury.
Where lies that cask of wine whereof we
plunder'd
The Norman prelate ?

LITTLE JOHN. In that oak, where twelve
Can stand upright, nor touch each other.

ROBIN. Good !
Roll it in here. These friars, thieves, and liars,
Shall drink the health of our new woodland
Queen.

And they shall pledge thee, Marian, loud enough
To fright the wild hawk passing overhead,
The mouldwarp underfoot.

MARIAN. *They* pledge me, Robin ?
The silent blessing of one honest man
Is heard in heaven—the wassail yells of thief
And rogue and liar echo down in Hell,
And wake the Devil, and I may sicken by 'em.
Well, well, be it so, thou strongest thief of all,
For thou hast stolen my will, and made it
thine.

THE FORESTERS

ACT III

FRIAR TUCK, LITTLE JOHN, MUCH, *and* SCARLET
roll in cask

FRIAR TUCK. I marvel is it sack or Malvoisie ?

ROBIN. Do me the service to tap it, and thou wilt know.

FRIAR TUCK. I would tap myself in thy service, Robin.

ROBIN. And thou wouldst run more wine than blood.

FRIAR TUCK. And both at thy service, Robin.

ROBIN. I believe thee, thou art a good fellow, though a friar. [*They pour the wine into cups.*]

FRIAR TUCK. Fill to the brim. Our Robin,
King o' the woods,
Wherever the horn sound, and the buck bound,
Robin, the people's friend, the King o' the
woods ! [*They drink.*]

ROBIN. To the brim and over till the green
earth drink
Her health along with us in this rich draught,
And answer it in flowers. The Queen o' the
woods,

Wherever the buck bound, and the horn sound,
Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods ! [*They drink.*]

Here, you three rogues,
[*To the BEGGARS. They come out.*]

You caught a lonely woodman of our band,
And bruised him almost to the death, and took
His monies.

THIRD BEGGAR. Captain, nay, it wasn't me.

ROBIN. You ought to dangle up there among
the crows.
Drink to the health of our new Queen o' the
woods,
Or else be bound and beaten.

FIRST BEGGAR. Sir, sir—well,
We drink the health of thy new Queen o' the
woods.

ROBIN. Louder! louder! Maid Marian,
Queen o' the woods!

BEGGARS (*shouting*). Maid Marian, Queen o'
the woods: Queen o' the woods!

FIRST AND SECOND BEGGARS (*aside*). The
black fiend grip her! [*They drink.*]

ROBIN (*to the FRIARS*). And you three holy
men, [*They come out.*]
You worshippers of the Virgin, one of you
Shamed a too trustful widow whom you heard
In her confession; and another—worse!—
An innocent maid. Drink to the Queen o' the
woods,

Or else be bound and beaten.

FIRST FRIAR. Robin Hood,
These be the lies the people tell of us,
Because we seek to curb their viciousness.
However—to this maid, this Queen o' the woods.

ROBIN. Louder, louder, ye knaves. Maid
Marian!
Queen o' the woods!

FRIARS (*shouting*). Maid Marian, Queen o'
the woods.

THE FORESTERS

ACT III

FIRST FRIAR (*aside*). Maid ?

SECOND FRIAR (*aside*). Paramour !

THIRD FRIAR (*aside*). Hell take her !

[*They drink.*]

FRIAR TUCK. Robin, will you not hear one of these beggars' catches ? They can do it. I have heard 'em in the market at Mansfield.

LITTLE JOHN. No, my lord, hear ours—Robin—I crave pardon, I always think of you as my lord, but I may still say my lady ; and, my lady, Kate and I have fallen out again, and I pray you to come between us again, for, my lady, we have made a song in your honour, so your ladyship care to listen.

ROBIN. Sing, and by St. Mary these beggars and these friars shall join you. Play the air, Little John.

LITTLE JOHN. Air and word, my lady, are maid and man. Join them and they are a true marriage ; and so, I pray you, my lady, come between me and my Kate and make us one again. Scarlet, begin.

[*Playing the air on his viol.*]

SCARLET.

By all the deer that spring
Thro' wood and lawn and ling,
When all the leaves are green ;
By arrow and gray goosewing,
When horn and echo ring,
We care so much for a King ;
We care not much for a Queen—
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

MARIAN. Do you call that in my honour?

SCARLET. Bitters before dinner, my lady, to give you a relish. The first part—made before you came among us—they put it upon me because I have a bad wife. I love you all the same. Proceed. *[All the rest sing.]*

By all leaves of spring,
And all the birds that sing
When all the leaves are green ;
By arrow and by bowstring,
We care so much for a King
That we would die for a Queen—
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

Enter FORESTER

FORESTER. Black news, black news from Nottingham ! I grieve
I am the Raven who croaks it. My lord John,
In wrath because you drove him from the forest,
Is coming with a swarm of mercenaries
To break our band and scatter us to the winds.

MARIAN. O Robin, Robin ! See that men
be set
Along the glades and passes of the wood
To warn us of his coming ! then each man
That owns a wife or daughter, let him bury her
Even in the bowels of the earth to 'scape
The glance of John——

ROBIN. You hear your Queen, obey !

ACT IV

THE CONCLUSION

SCENE.—A FOREST BOWER, CAVERN IN BACKGROUND.
SUNRISE.

MARIAN (*rising to meet ROBIN*). Robin, the
sweet light of a mother's eye,
That beam of dawn upon the opening flower,
Has never glanced upon me when a child.
He was my father, mother, both in one.
The love that children owe to both I give
To him alone.

(ROBIN *offers to caress her*)

MARIAN. Quiet, good Robin, quiet !
You lovers are such clumsy summer-flies
For ever buzzing at your lady's face.

ROBIN. Bees rather, flying to the flower for
honey.

MARIAN (*sings*).

The bee buzz'd up in the heat.

'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'

THE FORESTERS

The flower said 'Take it, my dear,
For now is the spring of the year.

So come, come !'

'Hum !'

And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold
When the flower was wither'd and old.

'Have you still any honey, my dear ?'

She said 'It's the fall of the year,

But come, come !'

'Hum !'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

ROBIN. Out on thy song !

MARIAN. Did I not sing it in tune ?

ROBIN. No, sweetheart ! out of tune with
Love and me.

MARIAN. And yet in tune with Nature and
the bees.

ROBIN. Out on it, I say, as out of tune and
time !

MARIAN. Till thou thyself shalt come to sing
it—in time.

ROBIN (*taking a tress of her hair in his hand*).

Time ! if his backward-working alchemy
Should change this gold to silver, why, the
silver

Were dear as gold, the wrinkle as the dimple.
Thy bee should buzz about the Court of John.
No ribald John is Love, no wanton Prince,
The ruler of an hour, but lawful King,
Whose writ will run thro' all the range of life.
Out upon all hard-hearted maidenhood !

MARIAN. And out upon all simple batchelors !

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

Ah, well ! thou seest the land has come between
us,

And my sick father here has come between us
And this rich Sheriff too has come between us ;
So, is it not all over now between us ?
Gone, like a deer that hath escaped thine arrow !

ROBIN. What deer when I have mark'd him
ever yet
Escaped mine arrow ? over is it ? wilt thou
Give me thy hand on that ?

MARIAN. Take it.

ROBIN (*kisses her hand*). The Sheriff !
This ring cries out against thee. Say it again,
And by this ring the lips that never breathed
Love's falsehood to true maid will seal Love's
truth

On those sweet lips that dare to dally with it.

MARIAN. Quiet, quiet ! or I will to my
father.

ROBIN. So, then, thy father will not grace
our feast
With his white beard to-day.

MARIAN. Being so sick
How should he, Robin ?

ROBIN. Then that bond he hath
Of the Abbot—wilt thou ask him for it ?

MARIAN. Why ?

ROBIN. I have sent to the Abbot and justiciary
To bring their counter-bond into the forest.

MARIAN. But will they come ?

ROBIN. If not I have let them know

Their lives unsafe in any of these our woods,
And in the winter I will fire their farms.
But I have sworn by our Lady if they come
I will not tear the bond, but see fair play
Betwixt them and Sir Richard—promised too,
So that they deal with us like honest men,
They shall be handled with all courteousness.

MARIAN. What wilt thou do with the bond
then ?

ROBIN. Wait and see.

What wilt thou do with the Sheriff ?

MARIAN. Wait and see.

I bring the bond.

[*Exit* MARIAN.]

Enter LITTLE JOHN, FRIAR TUCK, and MUCH, and
FORESTERS and PEASANTS *laughing and talking*

ROBIN. Have ye glanced down thro' all the
forest ways
And mark'd if those two knaves from York be
coming ?

LITTLE JOHN. Not yet, but here comes one
of bigger mould. [*Enter* KING RICHARD.
Art thou a knight ?

KING RICHARD. I am.

ROBIN. And walkest here
Unarmour'd ? all these walks are Robin Hood's
And sometimes perilous.

KING RICHARD. Good ! but having lived
For twenty days and nights in mail, at last
I crawl'd like a sick crab from my old shell,

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

That I might breathe for a moment free of shield
And cuirass in this forest where I dream'd
That all was peace—not even a Robin Hood—
(*Aside*) What if these knaves should know me
for their King?

ROBIN. Art thou for Richard, or allied to
John?

KING RICHARD. I *am* allied to John.

ROBIN. The worse for thee.

KING RICHARD. Art thou that banish'd lord
of Huntingdon,
The chief of these outlaws who break the law?

ROBIN. I am the yeoman, plain Robin Hood,
and being out of the law how should we break
the law? if we broke into it again we should
break the law, and then we were no longer out-
laws.

KING RICHARD. But, Earl, if thou be he——

FRIAR TUCK. Fine him! fine him! he hath
called plain Robin an earl. How much is it,
Robin, for a knight?

ROBIN. A mark.

KING RICHARD (*gives it*). There.

ROBIN. Thou payest easily, like a good fellow,
But being o' John's side we must have thy gold.

KING RICHARD. But I am more for Richard
than for John.

ROBIN. What, what, a truckler! a word-
eating coward!

Nay, search him then. How much hast thou
about thee?

KING RICHARD. I had one mark.

ROBIN. What more.

KING RICHARD. No more, I think.

But how then if I will not bide to be search'd ?

ROBIN. We are four to one.

KING RICHARD. And I might deal with four.

ROBIN. Good, good, I love thee for that !
but if I wind

This forest-horn of mine I can bring down
Fourscore tall fellows on thee.

KING RICHARD. Search me then.
I should be hard beset with thy fourscore.

LITTLE JOHN (*searching* KING RICHARD).
Robin, he hath no more. He hath
spoken truth.

ROBIN. I am glad of it. Give him back his
gold again.

KING RICHARD. But I had liefer than this
gold again—

Not having broken fast the livelong day—
Something to eat.

ROBIN. And thou shalt have it, man.
Our feast is yonder, spread beneath an oak,
Venison, and wild boar, hare, geese, besides
Hedge-pigs, a savoury viand, so thou be
Squeamish at eating the King's venison.

KING RICHARD. Nay, Robin, I am like thy-
self in that
I look on the King's venison as my own.

FRIAR TUCK. Ay, ay, Robin, but let him
know our forest laws : he that pays not for his

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

dinner must fight for it. In the sweat of thy brow, says Holy Writ, shalt thou eat bread, but in the sweat of thy brow and thy breast, and thine arms, and thy legs, and thy heart, and thy liver, and in the fear of thy life shalt thou eat the King's venison—ay, and so thou fight at quarterstaff for thy dinner with our Robin, that will give thee a new zest for it, though thou wert like a bottle full up to the cork, or as hollow as a kex, or the shambles-oak, or a weasel-sucked egg, or the head of a fool, or the heart of Prince John, or any other symbol of vacuity.

[They bring out the quarterstuffs, and the FORESTERS and PEASANTS crowd round to see the games, and applaud at intervals.]

KING RICHARD. Great woodland king, I know not quarterstaff.

LITTLE JOHN. A fine! a fine! He hath called plain Robin a king.

ROBIN. A shadow, a poetical fiction—did ye not call me king in your song?—a mere figure. Let it go by.

FRIAR TUCK. No figure, no fiction, Robin. What, is not man a hunting animal? And look you now, if we kill a stag, our dogs have their paws cut off, and the hunters, if caught, are blinded, or worse than blinded. Is that to be a king? If the king and the law work injustice, is not he that goes against the king and the law the true king in the sight of the King of kings?

Thou art the king of the forest, and I would thou wert the king of the land.

KING RICHARD. This friar is of much boldness, noble captain.

ROBIN. He hath got it from the bottle, noble knight.

FRIAR TUCK. Boldness out of the bottle ! I defy thee.

Boldness is in the blood, Truth in the bottle.
She lay so long at the bottom of her well
In the cold water that she lost her voice,
And so she glided up into the heart
O' the bottle, the warm wine, and found it again.

In vino veritas. Shall I undertake
The knight at quarterstaff, or thou ?

ROBIN. Peace, magpie !
Give him the quarterstaff. Nay, but thyself
Shalt play a bout with me, that he may see
The fashion of it.

[*Plays with FRIAR TUCK at quarterstaff.*

KING RICHARD. Well, then, let me try.

[*They play.*

I yield, I yield. I know no quarterstaff.

ROBIN. Then thou shalt play the game of
buffets with us.

KING RICHARD. What's that ?

ROBIN. I stand up here, thou there. I give thee

A buffet, and thou me. The Holy Virgin
Stand by the strongest. I am over-breathed,

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

Friar, by my two bouts at quarterstaff.
Take him and try him, friar.

FRIAR TUCK. There ! [*Strikes.*

KING RICHARD (*strikes*). There ! [FRIAR *falls.*

FRIAR TUCK. There !

Thou hast roll'd over the Church militant
Like a tod of wool from wagon into warehouse.
Nay, I defy thee still. Try me an hour hence.
I am misty with my thimbleful of ale.

ROBIN. Thou seest, Sir Knight, our friar is
so holy
That he's a miracle-monger, and can make
Five quarts pass into a thimble. Up, good
Much.

FRIAR TUCK. And show thyself more of a
man than me.

MUCH. Well, no man yet has ever bowl'd
me down.

SCARLET. Ay, for old Much is every inch a
man.

ROBIN. We should be all the more beholden
to him.

MUCH. Much and more ! much and more !
I am the oldest of thy men, and thou and thy
youngsters are always muching and moreing me.

ROBIN. Because thou art always so much
more of a man than my youngsters, old Much.

MUCH. Well, we Muches be old.

ROBIN. Old as the hills.

MUCH. Old as the mill. We had it i' the

Red King's time, and so I *may* be more of a man than to be bowled over like a ninepin. There !

[*Strikes.*

KING RICHARD. There ! [MUCH *falls.*

ROBIN. 'Much would have more,' says the proverb ; but Much hath had more than enough. Give me thy hand, Much ; I love thee (*lifts him up*). At him, Scarlet !

SCARLET. I cannot cope with him : my wrist is strain'd.

KING RICHARD. Try, thyself, valorous Robin !

ROBIN. I am mortally afraid o' thee, thou big man,
But seeing valour is one against all odds,
There !

KING RICHARD. There !

[ROBIN *falls back, and is caught in the arms of*
LITTLE JOHN.

ROBIN. Good, now I love thee mightily, thou tall fellow.
Break thine alliance with this faithless John,
And live with us and the birds in the green wood.

KING RICHARD. I cannot break it, Robin, if I wish'd.
Still I am more for Richard than for John.

LITTLE JOHN. Look, Robin, at the far end of the glade
I see two figures crawling up the hill.

[*Distant sound of trumpets.*

ROBIN. The Abbot of York and his justiciary.

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

KING RICHARD (*aside*). They know me. I must not as yet be known.

Friends, your free sports have swallow'd my free hour.

Farewell at once, for I must hence upon The King's affair.

ROBIN. Not taste his venison first?

FRIAR TUCK. Hast thou not fought for it, and earn'd it? Stay,

Dine with my brethren here, and on thine own.

KING RICHARD. And which be they?

FRIAR TUCK. Geese, man! for how canst thou be thus allied

With John, and serve King Richard save thou be

A traitor or a goose? but stay with Robin;

For Robin is no scatterbrains like Richard,

Robin's a wise man, Richard a wiseacre,

Robin's an outlaw, but he helps the poor.

While Richard hath outlaw'd himself, and helps Nor rich, nor poor. Richard's the king of courtesy,

For if he did me the good grace to kick me

I could but sneak and smile and call it courtesy,

For he's a king.

And that is only courtesy *by* courtesy—

But Robin is a thief of courtesy

Whom they that suffer by him call the blossom

Of bandits. There—to be a thief of courtesy—

There is a trade of genius, there's glory!

Again, this Richard sacks and wastes a town

With random pillage, but our Robin takes
From whom he knows are hypocrites and liars.
Again this Richard risks his life for a straw,
So lies in prison—while our Robin's life
Hangs by a thread, but he is a free man.
Richard, again, is king over a realm
He hardly knows, and Robin king of Sherwood,
And loves and dotes on every dingle of it.
Again this Richard is the lion of Cyprus,
Robin, the lion of Sherwood—may this mouth
Never suck grape again, if our true Robin
Be not the nobler lion of the twain.

KING RICHARD. Gramercy for thy preach-
ment ! if the land
Were ruleable by tongue, thou shouldst be king.
And yet thou know'st how little of thy king !
What was this realm of England, all the crowns
Of all this world, to Richard when he flung
His life, heart, soul into those holy wars
That sought to free the tomb-place of the King
Of all the world ? thou, that art churchman too
In a fashion, and shouldst feel with him. Fare-
well !

I left mine horse and armour with a Squire,
And I must see to 'em.

ROBIN. When wilt thou return ?

KING RICHARD. Return, I ? when ? when
Richard will return.

ROBIN. No sooner ? when will that be ?
canst thou tell ?

But I have ta'en a sudden fancy to thee.

ACT IV

[*Exit* KING RICHARD.]

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ROBIN. He hath been hurt, was growing
whole again,
Only this morning in his agony
Lest he should fail to pay these thousand marks
He is stricken with a slight paralysis.
Have you no pity? must you see the man?

JUSTICIARY. Ay, ay, what else? how else can
this be settled?

ROBIN. Go men, and fetch him hither on
the litter.

[SIR RICHARD LEA *is brought in*. MARIAN
comes with him.]

MARIAN. Here is my father's bond.

[*Gives it to* ROBIN HOOD.]

ROBIN. I thank thee, dear.

JUSTICIARY. Sir Richard, it was agreed when
you borrowed these monies from the Abbot that
if they were not repaid within a limited time
your land should be forfeit.

SIR RICHARD. The land! the land.

MARIAN. You see he is past himself.
What would you more?

ABBOT. What more? one thousand marks,
Or else the land.

You hide this damsel in your forest here,
[*Pointing to* MARIAN.]

You hope to hold and keep her for yourself,
You heed not how you soil her maiden fame,
You scheme against her father's weal and hers,
For so this maid would wed our brother, he
Would pay us all the debt at once, and thus

This old Sir Richard might redeem his land.
He is all for love, he cares not for the land.

SIR RICHARD. The land, the land !

ROBIN (*giving two bags to the ABBOT*). Here be
one thousand marks
Out of our treasury to redeem the land.

[*Pointing to each of the bags.*

Half here, half there. [Plaudits from his band.

JUSTICIARY. Ay, ay, but there is use, four
hundred marks.

ROBIN (*giving a bag to JUSTICIARY*). There
then, four hundred marks. [Plaudits.

JUSTICIARY. What did I say ?
Nay, my tongue tript—five hundred marks for
use.

ROBIN (*giving another bag to him*). A hundred
more ? There then, a hundred more.
[Plaudits.

JUSTICIARY. Ay, ay, but you see the bond
and the letter of the law. It is stated there that
these monies should be paid in to the Abbot at
York, at the end of the month at noon, and they
are delivered here in the wild wood an hour
after noon.

MARIAN. The letter—O how often justice
drowns

Between the law and letter of the law !

O God, I would the letter of the law

Were some strong fellow here in the wild wood,

That thou mightst beat him down at quarterstaff !

Have you no pity ?

JUSTICIARY. You run down your game,
We ours. What pity have you for your game?

ROBIN. We needs must live. Our bowmen
are so true

They strike the deer at once to death—he falls
And knows no more.

MARIAN. Pity, pity!—There was a man of ours
Up in the north, a goodly fellow too,
He met a stag there on so narrow a ledge—
A precipice above, and one below—
There was no room to advance or to retire.
The man lay down—the delicate-footed creature
Came stepping o'er him, so as not to harm him—
The hunter's passion flash'd into the man,
He drove his knife into the heart of the deer,
The deer fell dead to the bottom, and the man
Fell with him, and was crippled ever after.
I fear I had small pity for that man.—
You have the monies and the use of them.
What would you more?

JUSTICIARY. What? must we dance attendance
all the day?

ROBIN. Dance! ay, by all the saints and all
the devils ye shall dance. When the Church and
the law have forgotten God's music, they shall
dance to the music of the wild wood. Let the
birds sing, and do you dance to their song.
What, you will not? Strike up our music,
Little John. (*He plays.*) They will not!
Prick 'em in the calves with the arrow-points—
prick 'em in the calves.

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

ABBOT. Rogue, I am full of gout. I cannot dance.

ROBIN. And Sir Richard cannot redeem his land. Sweat out your gout, friend, for by my life, you shall dance till he can. Prick him in the calves !

JUSTICIARY. Rogue, I have a swollen vein in my right leg, and if thou prick me there I shall die.

ROBIN. Prick him where thou wilt, so that he dance.

ABBOT. Rogue, we come not alone.

JUSTICIARY. Not the right.

ABBOT. We told the Prince and the Sheriff of our coming.

JUSTICIARY. Take the left leg for the love of God.

ABBOT. They follow us.

JUSTICIARY. You will all of you hang.

ROBIN. Let us hang, so thou dance meanwhile ; or by that same love of God we will hang *thee*, prince or no prince, sheriff or no sheriff.

JUSTICIARY. Take care, take care ! I dance—I will dance—I dance.

[ABBOT and JUSTICIARY dance to music, each holding a bag in each hand.]

Enter SCARLET

SCARLET. The Sheriff! the Sheriff, follow'd by Prince John

And all his mercenaries ! We sighted 'em.
Only this moment. By St. Nicholas
They must have sprung like Ghosts from under-
ground,
Or, like the Devils they are, straight up from
Hell.

ROBIN. Crouch all into the bush !

[*The FORESTERS and PEASANTS hide behind the bushes.*]

MARIAN. Take up the litter !

SIR RICHARD. Move me no more ! I am sick
and faint with pain !

MARIAN. But, Sir, the Sheriff——

SIR RICHARD. Let me be, I say !
The Sheriff will be welcome ! let me be !

MARIAN. Give me my bow and arrows. I
remain
Beside my Father's litter.

ROBIN. And fear not thou !
Each of us has an arrow on the cord ;
We all keep watch.

Enter SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM

SHERIFF. Marian !

MARIAN. Speak not. I wait upon a dying
father.

SHERIFF. The debt hath not been paid. She
will be mine.

What are you capering for ? By old St. Vitus
Have you gone mad ? Has it been paid ?

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

ABBOT (*dancing*).

O yes.

SHERIFF. Have I lost her then?

JUSTICIARY (*dancing*). Lost her? O no, we took

Advantage of the letter—O Lord, the vein!

Not paid at York—the wood—prick me no more!

SHERIFF. What pricks thee save it be thy conscience, man?

JUSTICIARY. By my halidome I felt him at my leg still. Where be they gone to?

SHERIFF. Thou art alone in the silence of the forest

Save for this maiden and thy brother Abbot,
And this old crazeling in the litter there.

Enter on one side FRIAR TUCK from the bush, and on the other PRINCE JOHN and his SPEARMEN, with banners and trumpets, etc.

JUSTICIARY (*examining his leg*). They have missed the vein.

ABBOT. And we shall keep the land.

SHERIFF. Sweet Marian, by the letter of the law

It seems thy father's land is forfeited.

SIR RICHARD. No! let me out of the litter.

He shall wed thee:

The land shall still be mine. Child, thou shalt wed him,

Or thine old father will go mad—he will,

He will—he feels it in his head.

MARIAN. O peace !
Father, I cannot marry till Richard comes.

SIR RICHARD. And then the Sheriff !

MARIAN. Ay, the Sheriff, father,
Would buy me for a thousand marks in
gold—

Sell me again perchance for twice as much.
A woman's heart is but a little thing,
Much lighter than a thousand marks in gold ;
But pity for a father, it may be,
Is weightier than a thousand marks in gold.
I cannot love the Sheriff.

SIR RICHARD. But thou wilt wed him ?

MARIAN. Ay, save King Richard, when he
comes, forbid me.

Sweet heavens, I could wish that all the land
Were plunged beneath the waters of the sea,
Tho' all the world should go about in boats.

FRIAR TUCK. Why, so should all the love-
sick be sea-sick.

MARIAN. Better than heart-sick, friar.

PRINCE JOHN (*to SHERIFF*). See you not
They are jesting at us yonder, mocking us ?
Carry her off, and let the old man die.

[*Advancing to MARIAN.*

Come, girl, thou shalt along with us on the
instant.

FRIAR TUCK (*brandishing his staff*). Then on
the instant I will break thy head.

SHERIFF. Back, thou fool-friar ! Knowest
thou not the Prince ?

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

FRIAR TUCK (*muttering*). He may be prince ;
he is not gentleman.

PRINCE JOHN. Look ! I will take the rope
from off thy waist

And twist it round thy neck and hang thee by it.
Seize him and truss him up, and carry her off.

[FRIAR TUCK *slips into the bush*.

MARIAN (*drawing the bow*). No nearer to me !
back ! My hand is firm,

Mine eye most true to one hair's-breadth of aim.
You, Prince, our king to come—you that
dishonour

The daughters and the wives of your own
faction—

Who hunger for the body, not the soul—
This gallant Prince would have me of his—what ?
Household ? or shall I call it by that new term
Brought from the sacred East, his harem ? Never,
Tho' you should queen me over all the realms
Held by King Richard, could I stoop so low
As mate with one that holds no love is pure,
No friendship sacred, values neither man
Nor woman save as tools—God help the mark—
To his own unprincely ends. And you, you,
Sheriff, [Turning to the SHERIFF.

Who thought to buy your marrying me with
gold.

Marriage is of the soul, not of the body.
Win me you cannot, murder me you may,
And all I love, Robin, and all his men,
For I am one with him and his ; but while

I breathe Heaven's air, and Heaven looks down
on me,

And smiles at my best meanings, I remain
Mistress of mine own self and mine own soul.

[Retreating, with bow drawn, to the bush.]

Robin !

ROBIN. I am here, my arrow on the cord.
He dies who dares to touch thee.

PRINCE JOHN. Advance, advance !
What, daunted by a garrulous, arrogant girl !
Seize her and carry her off into my castle.

SHERIFF. Thy castle !

PRINCE JOHN. Said I not, I loved thee, man ?
Risk not the love I bear thee for a girl.

SHERIFF. Thy castle !

PRINCE JOHN. See thou thwart me not, thou
fool !

When Richard comes he is soft enough to
pardon

His brother ; but all those that held with him,
Except I plead for them, will hang as high
As Haman.

SHERIFF. She is mine. I have thy promise.

PRINCE JOHN. O ay, she shall be thine—first
mine, then thine.

For she shall spend her honeymoon with me.

SHERIFF. Woe to that land shall own thee
for her king !

PRINCE JOHN. Advance, advance !

*[They advance shouting. The KING in armour
reappears from the wood.]*

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

KING RICHARD. What shouts are these that ring along the wood?

FRIAR TUCK (*coming forward*). Hail, knight, and help us. Here is one would clutch Our pretty Marian for his paramour, This other, willy-nilly, for his bride.

KING RICHARD. Damsel, is this the truth?

MARIAN. Ay, noble knight.

FRIAR TUCK. Ay, and she will not marry till Richard come.

KING RICHARD (*raising his vizor*). I am here, and I am he.

PRINCE JOHN (*lowering his, and whispering to his men*). It is not he—his face—tho' very like—

No, no! we have certain news he died in prison. Make at him, all of you, a traitor coming In Richard's name—it is not he—not he.

[*The men stand amazed.*]

FRIAR TUCK (*going back to the bush*). Robin, shall we not move?

ROBIN. It is the King Who bears all down. Let him alone awhile. He loves the chivalry of his single arm. Wait till he blow the horn.

FRIAR TUCK (*coming back*). If thou be king, Be not a fool! Why blowest thou not the horn?

KING RICHARD. I that have turn'd their Moslem crescent pale— I blow the horn against this rascal rout!

[FRIAR TUCK *plucks the horn from him and blows.* RICHARD *dashes alone against the SHERIFF and JOHN's men, and is almost borne down, when ROBIN and his men rush in and rescue him.*

KING RICHARD (*to ROBIN HOOD*). Thou hast saved my head at the peril of thine own.

PRINCE JOHN. A horse! a horse! I must away at once;

I cannot meet his eyes. I go to Nottingham.

Sheriff, thou wilt find me at Nottingham. [*Exit.*

SHERIFF. If anywhere, I shall find thee in hell. What! go to slay his brother, and make *me* The monkey that should roast his chestnuts for him!

KING RICHARD. I fear to ask who left us even now.

ROBIN. I grieve to say it was thy father's son. Shall I not after him and bring him back?

KING RICHARD. No, let him be. Sheriff of Nottingham, [*SHERIFF kneels.* I have been away from England all these years, Heading the holy war against the Moslem, While thou and others in our kingless realms Were fighting underhand unholy wars Against your lawful king.

SHERIFF. My liege, Prince John—

KING RICHARD. Say thou no word against my brother John.

SHERIFF. Why then, my liege, I have no word to say.

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

KING RICHARD (*to* ROBIN). My good friend
Robin, Earl of Huntingdon,
For Earl thou art again, hast thou no fetters
For those of thine own band who would betray
thee?

ROBIN. I have; but these were never worn
as yet.

I never found one traitor in my band.

KING RICHARD. Thou art happier than thy
king. Put him in chains.

[They fetter the SHERIFF.]

ROBIN. Look o'er these bonds, my liege.

[Shows the KING the bonds. They talk together.]

KING RICHARD. You, my lord Abbot, you
Justiciary,

[The ABBOT and JUSTICIARY kneel.]

I made you Abbot, you Justiciary:

You both are utter traitors to your king.

JUSTICIARY. O my good liege, we did believe
you dead.

ROBIN. Was justice dead because the King
was dead?

Sir Richard paid his monies to the Abbot.

You crost him with a quibble of your law.

KING RICHARD. But on the faith and honour
of a king

The land is his again.

SIR RICHARD. The land! the land!

I am crazed no longer, so I have the land.

[Comes out of the litter and kneels.]

God save the King!

KING RICHARD (*raising* SIR RICHARD). I
thank thee, good Sir Richard.

Maid Marian.

MARIAN. Yes, King Richard.

KING RICHARD. Thou wouldst marry
This Sheriff when King Richard came again
Except—

MARIAN. The King forbad it. True, my
liege.

KING RICHARD. How if the King command
it?

MARIAN. Then, my liege,
If you would marry me with a traitor sheriff,
I fear I might prove traitor with the sheriff.

KING RICHARD. But if the King forbid thy
marrying
With Robin, our good Earl of Huntingdon.

MARIAN. Then will I live for ever in the
wild wood.

ROBIN (*coming forward*). And I with thee.

KING RICHARD. On nuts and acorns, ha !
Or the King's deer ? Earl, thou when we were
hence

Hast broken all our Norman forest laws,
And scruplest not to flaunt it to our face
That thou wilt break our forest laws again
When we are here. Thou art overbold.

ROBIN. My king,
I am but the echo of the lips of love.

KING RICHARD. Thou hast risk'd thy life for
mine : bind these two men.

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

[They take the bags from the ABBOT and JUSTICIARY, and proceed to fetter them.]

JUSTICIARY. But will the King, then, judge us all unheard?

I can defend my cause against the traitors
Who fain would make me traitor. If the King
Condemn us without trial, men will call him
An Eastern tyrant, not an English king.

ABBOT. Besides, my liege, these men are
outlaws, thieves,
They break thy forest laws—nay, by the rood
They have done far worse—they plunder—yea,
ev'n bishops,

Yea, ev'n archbishops—if thou side with these,
Beware, O King, the vengeance of the Church.

FRIAR TUCK (*brandishing his staff*). I pray
you, my liege, let me execute the vengeance of
the Church upon them. I have a stout crab-
stick here, which longs to break itself across
their backs.

ROBIN. Keep silence, bully friar, before the
King.

FRIAR TUCK. If a cat may look at a king,
may not a friar speak to one?

KING RICHARD. I have had a year of prison-
silence, Robin,
And heed him not—the vengeance of the
Church!

Thou shalt pronounce the blessing of the Church
On those two here, Robin and Marian.

MARIAN. He is but hedge-priest, Sir King.

KING RICHARD. And thou their Queen.
Our rebel Abbot then shall join your hands,
Or lose all hope of pardon from us—yet
Not now, not now—with after-dinner grace.
Nay, by the dragon of St. George, we shall
Do some injustice, if you hold us here
Longer from our own venison. Where is it?
I scent it in the green leaves of the wood.

MARIAN. First, king, a boon!

KING RICHARD. Why surely ye are pardon'd,
Even this brawler of harsh truths—I trust
Half truths, good friar: ye shall with us to court.
Then, if ye cannot breathe but woodland air,
Thou Robin shalt be ranger of this forest,
And have thy fees, and break the law no more.

MARIAN. It is not that, my lord.

KING RICHARD. Then what, my lady?

MARIAN. This is the gala-day of thy return.
I pray thee, for the moment strike the bonds
From these three men, and let them dine with
us,

And lie with us among the flowers, and drink—
Ay, whether it be gall or honey to 'em—
The king's good health in ale and Malvoisie.

KING RICHARD. By Mahound I could dine
with Beelzebub!

So now which way to the dinner?

MARIAN. Past the bank
Of foxglove, then to left by that one yew.
You see the darkness thro' the lighter leaf.
But look, who comes?

THE FORESTERS

ACT IV

Enter SAILOR

SAILOR. We heard Sir Richard Lea was here
with Robin.

O good Sir Richard, I am like the man
In Holy Writ, who brought his talent back ;
For tho' we touch'd at many pirate ports,
We ever fail'd to light upon thy son.
Here is thy gold again. I am sorry for it.

SIR RICHARD. The gold—my son—my gold,
my son, the land—

Here Abbot, Sheriff—no—no, Robin Hood.

ROBIN. Sir Richard, let that wait till we have
dined.

Are all our guests here ?

KING RICHARD. No—there's yet one other :
I will not dine without him. Come from out

[*Enter WALTER LEA.*

That oak-tree ! This young warrior broke his
prison

And join'd my banner in the Holy Land,

And cleft the Moslem turban at my side.

My masters, welcome gallant Walter Lea.

Kiss him, Sir Richard—kiss him, my sweet
Marian.

MARIAN. O Walter, Walter, is it thou indeed
Whose ransom was our ruin, whose return

Builds up our house again ? I fear I dream.

Here—give me one sharp pinch upon the cheek
That I may feel thou art no phantom—yet

Thou art tann'd almost beyond my knowing,
brother. *[They embrace.]*

WALTER LEA. But thou art fair as ever, my
sweet sister.

SIR RICHARD. Art thou my son?

WALTER LEA. I am, good father, I am.

SIR RICHARD. I had despair'd of thee—that
sent me crazed.

Thou art worth thy weight in all those marks of
gold,

Yea, and the weight of the very land itself,
Down to the inmost centre.

ROBIN. Walter Lea,
Give me that hand which fought for Richard
there.

Embrace me, Marian, and thou, good Kate,
[To KATE entering.]

Kiss and congratulate me, my good Kate.
[She kisses him.]

LITTLE JOHN. Lo now! lo now!
I have seen thee clasp and kiss a man indeed,
For our brave Robin is a man indeed.
Then by thine own account thou shouldst be
mine.

KATE. Well then, who kisses first?

LITTLE JOHN. Kiss both together.
[They kiss each other.]

ROBIN. Then all is well. In this full tide
of love,
Wave heralds wave: thy match shall follow
mine *(to LITTLE JOHN)*.

Would there were more—a hundred lovers more
To celebrate this advent of our King !

Our forest games are ended, our free life,
And we must hence to the King's court. I
trust

We shall return to the wood. Meanwhile, fare-
well

Old friends, old patriarch oaks. A thousand
winters

Will strip you bare as death, a thousand summers
Robe you life-green again. *You* seem, as it were,
Immortal, and we mortal. How few Junes
Will heat our pulses quicker ! How few frosts
Will chill the hearts that beat for Robin Hood !

MARIAN. And yet I think these oaks at dawn
and even,

Or in the balmy breathings of the night,
Will whisper evermore of Robin Hood.

We leave but happy memories to the forest.
We dealt in the wild justice of the woods.

All those poor serfs whom we have served will
bless us,

All those pale mouths which we have fed will
praise us—

All widows we have holpen pray for us,
Our Lady's blessed shrines throughout the land
Be all the richer for us. You, good friar,
You Much, you Scarlet, you dear Little John,
Your names will cling like ivy to the wood.
And here perhaps a hundred years away
Some hunter in day-dreams or half asleep

Will hear our arrows whizzing overhead,
And catch the winding of a phantom horn.

ROBIN. And surely these old oaks will
murmur thee

Marian along with Robin. I am most happy—
Art thou not mine?—and happy that our King
Is here again, never I trust to roam
So far again, but dwell among his own.
Strike up a stave, my masters, all is well.

SONG WHILE THEY DANCE A COUNTRY DANCE

Now the King is home again, and nevermore to roam again,
Now the King is home again, the King will have his own again,
Home again, home again, and each will have his own again,
All the birds in merry Sherwood sing and sing him home again.

DEMETER
AND OTHER POEMS

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN
AND AVA

I

At times our Britain cannot rest,
At times her steps are swift and rash ;
She moving, at her girdle clash
The golden keys of East and West.

II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
The sceptres of her West, her East,
To one, that ruling has increased
Her greatness and her self-content.

III

Your rule has made the people love
Their ruler. Your viceregal days
Have added fulness to the phrase
Of ' Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

IV

But since your name will grow with Time,
Not all, as honouring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the name
A golden portal to my rhyme :

V

But more, that you and yours may know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI

For he—your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you—
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',
To serve her myriads and the State,—

VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,
And on thro' many a brightening year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

VIII

Who might have chased and claspt Renown
And caught her chaplet here—and there
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering down ;

IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,
And lay on that funereal boat,
Dying, ' Unspeakable ' he wrote
' Their kindness,' and he wrote no more ;

X

And sacred is the latest word ;
And now the Was, the Might-have-been,
And those lone rites I have not seen,
And one drear sound I have not heard,

XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,
Not there to bid my boy farewell,
When That within the coffin fell,
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon
And alien stars. To question, why
The sons before the fathers die,
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,
Nor settles into hueless gray,
My memories of his briefer day
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and faded,
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the sceptre.

II

She beloved for a kindliness
Rare in Fable or History,
Queen, and Empress of India,
Crown'd so long with a diadem
Never worn by a worthier,
Now with prosperous auguries
Comes at last to the bounteous
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,
All is gracious, gentle, great and Queenly.

THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

IV

You then joyfully, all of you,
Set the mountain aflame to-night,
Shoot your stars to the firmament,
Deck your houses, illuminate
All your towns for a festival,
And in each let a multitude
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,
One full voice of allegiance,
Hail the fair Ceremonial
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queenhood,
Glorying in the glories of her people,
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest !

VI

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with you,
All the lowly, the destitute,
Make their neighbourhood healthfuller,
Give your gold to the Hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,

THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

Let the needy be banqueted,
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice
At this glad Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,
Gray with distance Edward's fifty summers,
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,
You that shape for Eternity,
Raise a stately memorial,
Make it regally gorgeous,
Some Imperial Institute,
Rich in symbol, in ornament,
Which may speak to the centuries,
All the centuries after us,
Of this great Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce !
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science !
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire !

THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

x

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,
You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,
Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,
All your voices in unison,
Singing 'Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee !'

xI

Are there thunders moaning in the distance ?
Are there spectres moving in the darkness ?
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are slow to fade away,
Bear witness you, that yesterday¹
 From out the Ghost of Pindar in you
Roll'd an Olympian ; and they say²

That here the torpid mummy wheat
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
 As that which gilds the glebe of England,
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,
If greeted by your classic smile,
 Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
Blossom again on a colder isle.

¹ In Bologna.

² They say, for the fact is doubtful.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies
All night across the darkness, and at dawn
Falls on the threshold of her native land,
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb
With passing thro' at once from state to state,
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,
Might break thro' clouded memories once again
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
And welcome ; and a gleam as of the moon,
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away
That shadow of a likeness to the king
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone !
Queen of the dead no more—my child ! Thine
eyes
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,
And robed thee in his day from head to feet—
'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power
Draw downward into Hades with his drift
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;
But when before have Gods or men beheld
The Life that had descended re-arise,
And lighted from above him by the Sun?
So mighty was the mother's childless cry,
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze
With flowers that brighten as thy footstep falls,
All flowers—but for one black blur of earth
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which the car
Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee hence.
And here, my child, tho' folded in thine arms,
I feel the deathless heart of motherhood
Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe
Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence
The shrilly whinnings of the team of Hell,
Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,
And all at once their arch'd necks, midnight-
maned,

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom. No !
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it ; all the space
Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,
And breaks into the crocus-purple hour
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
I envied human wives, and nested birds,
Yea, the cubb'd lioness ; went in search of thee
Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave
Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,
And set the mother waking in amaze
To find her sick one whole ; and forth again
Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried,
'Where is my loved one ? Wherefore do ye wail ?'
And out from all the night an answer shrill'd,
'We know not, and we know not why we wail.'
I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
And ask'd the waves that moan about the world
'Where ? do ye make your moaning for my child ?'
And round from all the world the voices came
'We know not, and we know not why we moan.'
'Where' ? and I stared from every eagle-peak,
I thridded the black heart of all the woods,
I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the storms
Of Autumn swept across the city, and heard
The murmur of their temples chanting me,
Me, me, the desolate Mother ! 'Where' ?—and
turn'd,
And fled by many a waste, forlorn of man,

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

And grieved for man thro' all my grief for thee,—
The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,
The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,
The scorpion crawling over naked skulls ;—
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
Spring from his fallen God, but trace of thee
I saw not ; and far on, and, following out
A league of labyrinthine darkness, came
On three gray heads beneath a gleaming rift.
'Where' ? and I heard one voice from all the
three
'We know not, for we spin the lives of men,
And not of Gods, and know not why we spin !
There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,
Without his knowledge, from him flits to warn
A far-off friendship that he comes no more,
So he, the God of dreams, who heard my cry,
Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow past
Before me, crying 'The Bright one in the highest
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I, the
child
Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee, the
Power
That lifts her buried life from gloom to bloom,
Should be for ever and for evermore
The Bride of Darkness.'

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

So the Shadow wail'd.
Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods of
Heaven.

I would not mingle with their feasts ; to me
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the lips,
Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
The man, that only lives and loves an hour,
Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my ravings hush'd
The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd
To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine
And golden grain, my gift to helpless man.
Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-spears
Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and the sun,
Pale at my grief, drew down before his time
Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness, He
Who still is highest, glancing from his height
On earth a fruitless fallow, when he miss'd
The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise
And prayer of men, decreed that thou should'st
dwell

For nine white moons of each whole year with me,
Three dark ones in the shadow with thy King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam of dawn
Will see me by the landmark far away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content
With them, who still are highest. Those gray
heads,

What meant they by their 'Fate beyond the Fates'
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us down,
As we bore down the Gods before us? Gods,
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to stay,
Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods indeed,
To send the noon into the night and break
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright year
with me,

And souls of men, who grew beyond their race,
And made themselves as Gods against the fear
Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast from men,
As Queen of Death, that worship which is Fear,
Henceforth, as having risen from out the dead,
Shalt ever send thy life along with mine
From buried grain thro' springing blade, and bless
Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with me,
Earth-Mother, in the harvest hymns of Earth
The worship which is Love, and see no more
The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glimmering
lawns

Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD ROÄ¹

NAÄY, noä mander² o' use to be callin' 'im Roä,
Roä, Roä,
Fur the dog's stoän-deäf, an' 'e's blind, 'e can
naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd ääge as 'appy
as iver I can,
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver owäd
mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby, afoor thou
was gotten too owd,
Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was allus as
good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e fowt; 'e
could howd³ 'is oan,
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when an' wheere
to bury his boane.

¹ Old Rover.

² Manner.

³ Hold.

OWD ROÄ

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an' 'e'd
niver not down wi' 'is taäl,
Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shaämed on, when
we was i' Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived, that,
Dick, when 'e cooms to be deäd,
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort of a
sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parliament man
'at stans fur us 'ere,
An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e could but
stan fur the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True'—them words be i' Scriptur
—an' Faäithful an' True
Ull be fun'¹ upo' four short legs ten times fur
one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but I knaws
they runs upo' four,²—
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs it be
strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we lived i'
Howlaby Daäle,
Ten year sin—Naäy—naäy! tha mun nobbut
hev' one glass of aäle.

¹ Found.

² 'Ou' as in 'house.'

OWD ROÄ

Straänge an' owd-farran'd¹ the 'ouse, an' belt²
long afoor my daäy
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd³ an'
twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud coom at
the fall o' the year,
An' saddle their ends upo stools to pictur the
door-poorch theere,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin' theere
o' the brokken stick ;⁴
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'⁵ as graw'd hall
ower the brick ;

An' theere i' the 'ouse one night—but it's down,
an' all on it now
Goan into mangles an' tonups,⁶ an' raäved slick
thruf by the plow—

Theere, when the 'ouse wur a house, one night
I wur sittin' aloän,
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an' sleeäpin' still
as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl as this, an' the
midders⁷ as white,

¹ 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

² Built.

³ 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

⁴ On a staff *ragulé*.

⁵ Ivy.

⁶ Mangolds and turnips.

⁷ Meadows.

OWD ROÄ

An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop wi' the
windle¹ that night ;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside Roäver, but
I wur awaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—Doänt
maäke thysen sick wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their songs an'
'ed 'ed their beer,
An' 'ed goän their waäys ; ther was nobbut three,
an' noän on 'em theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst an'
dussn't not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins² was nobbut a
rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst³ at the night, an' the
daäle was all of a thaw,
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a long
black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw slushin'
down fro' the bank to the beck,
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I feeäld it
drip o' my neck.

¹ Drifted snow.

² 'Moästlins,' for the most part, generally.

³ Once.

OWD ROÄ

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o' the good
 owd times 'at was goan,
An' the munney they maäde by the war, an' the
 times 'at was coomin' on ;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin' to let in
 furriners' wheät,
Howiver was British farmers to stan' ageän o'
 their feeät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to paäy
 my men?
An' all along o' the feller¹ as turn'd 'is back of
 hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we couldn't
 ha' 'eärd tha call,
Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha down, an'
 thy craädle an' all ;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha then 'ed
 gotten wer leäve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause o' the
 Christmas Eäve ;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when Moother
 'ed gotten to bed,
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the Freeä
 Traäde runn'd i' my 'ead,

¹ Peel.

OWD ROÄ

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I says to
him 'Squire, ya're laäte,'
Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as the Yule-
block theer i' the graäte.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy me the rent to-night?'
an' I says to 'im 'Noä,'
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,¹ 'Then
hout to-night tha shall goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma hout upo'
Christmas Eäve?'
Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver a-tuggin'
an' teärin' my slicäve.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud,² fur I noä-
waäys knaw'd 'is intent ;
An' I says 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I fetcht 'im
a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im, as if
'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,
An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy chaumber
door wouldn't sneck ;³

An' I slep' i' my chair ageän wi' my hairm
hingin' down to the floor,
An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin'
me wuss nor afoor,

¹ Arm.

² Mad.

³ Latch.

OWD ROÄ

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I kick'd
thy Moother istancead.

'What arta snorin' theere fur? the house is
afire,' she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about the gell
o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when there
warn't not a mossel o' harm ;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur gawin' that
waäy to the bad,

Fur the gell¹ was as howry a trollope as iver
traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I offens
'ev tell'd 'er mysen,

Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was nobbut
a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if tha'd
onywaäys let ma be good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair, an'
screeäd like a Howl gone wud²—

¹ The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged in the mud, but there is a sense of slatternliness in 'traäpes'd' which is not expressed in 'trudged.'

² She half overturned me and shrieked like an owl gone mad.

OWD ROÄ

‘Ya mun run fur the lether.¹ Git oop, if ya’re
onywaäys good for owt.’
And I says ‘If I beänt noäwaäys—not nowadaäys
—good fur nowt—

Yit I beänt sich a Nowt² of all Nowts as ’ull
hallus do as ’e’s bid.’
‘But the stairs is afire,’ she said ; then I seed ’er
a-cryin’, I did.

An’ she beäld ‘Ya mun saäve little Dick, an’ be
sharp about it an’ all,’
Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an’ sets ’im
ageän the wall,

An’ I claums an’ I mashes the winder hin, when
I gits to the top,
But the heät druv hout i’ my heyes till I feäld
mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin’ the lether, an’ tellin’
me not to be skeärd,
An’ I wasn’t afeärd, or I thinks leästwaäys as I
wasn’t afeärd ;

But I couldn’t see fur the smoäke wheere thou
was a-liggin, my lad,
An’ Roäver was there i’ the chaumber a-yowlin’
an’ yaupin’ like mad ;

¹ Ladder.

² A thoroughly insignificant or worthless person.

OWD ROÄ

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-squeälin',
as if tha was bit,
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the merk's¹
o' thy shou'der yit ;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw I didn't
haäfe think as 'e'd 'ear,
*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn i' 'is mouth
to the winder theree !*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as soon as 'e
'eärd 'is naäme,
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at summun
seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e
promised a son to she,
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i' saävin' a
son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says 'I mun gaw up
ageän fur Roä.'
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I tell'd 'er
'Yeäs I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder, an'
clemm'd² owd Roä by the 'eäd,
An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I taäked
'im at fust fur deäd ;

¹ Mark.

² Clutched.

OWD ROÄ

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an' seeäm'd
as blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.¹ I couldn't
wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the barn,
fur the barn wouldn't burn
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy, an' the
wind wasn't like to turn.

An' *I* kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled 'is taäil
fur a bit,
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all night,
an' I 'ears 'em yit ;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and thou
was a-squeälin' thysen,
An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin' an'
moänin' an' naggin' ageän ;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks² rummle
down when the roof gev waäy,
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an' roarin'
like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theere sewer-ly, but the barn was as
cowd as owt,
An' we cuddled and huddled together, an' happt³
wersens oop as we mowt.

¹ 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

² Beams.

³ Wrapt ourselves.

OWD ROÄ

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed beän
sa soäk'd wi' the thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that night,
poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the rigtree¹
was tummlin' in—
Too lääte—but it's all ower now—hall hower—
an' ten year sin ;

Too lääte, tha mun git tha to bed, but I'll coom
an' I'll squench the light,
Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires—and soa little
Dick, good-night.

¹ The beam that runs along the roof of the house just beneath the ridge.

VASTNESS

I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after
many a vanish'd face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the
dust of a vanish'd race.

II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth's
pale history runs,—
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam
of a million million of suns ?

III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless
violence mourn'd by the Wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a
popular torrent of lies upon lies ;

VASTNESS

IV

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious annals
of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong
cause, trumpets of victory, groans of
defeat ;

V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and
Charity setting the martyr aflame ;
Thralldom who walks with the banner of Freedom,
and recks not to ruin a realm in her name.

VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom
of doubts that darken the schools ;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand,
follow'd up by her vassal legion of fools ;

VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice
and her vintage, her silk and her corn ;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbours, famishing
populace, wharves forlorn ;

VASTNESS

VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise ; gloom
of the evening, Life at a close ;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-way with
her flying robe and her poison'd rose ;

IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of
Pleasure, a worm which writhes all day,
and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and
stings him back to the curse of the light ;

X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots ;
honest Poverty, bare to the bone ;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty ; Flattery gild-
ing the rift in a throne ;

XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a
jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate ;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the
laurel'd graves of the Great ;

VASTNESS

XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no
 regrets for aught that has been,
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless
 competence, golden mean ;

XIII

National hatreds of whole generations, and
 pigmy spites of the village spire ;
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and
 vows that are snapt in a moment of fire ;

XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and
 died in the doing it, flesh without mind ;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self
 died out in the love of his kind ;

XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter,
 and all these old revolutions of earth ;
All new-old revolutions of Empire—change of
 the tide—what is all of it worth ?

VASTNESS

XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy,
 varying voices of prayer ?
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is
 filthy with all that is fair ?

XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being
 our own corpse-coffins at last,
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd
 in the deeps of a meaningless Past ?

XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a
 moment's anger of bees in their hive ?—

* * * * *

Peace, let it be ! for I loved him, and love him
 for ever : the dead are not dead but alive.

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell

THE RING

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

MIRIAM (*singing*)

MELLOW moon of heaven,
Bright in blue,
Moon of married hearts,
Hear me, you !

Twelve times in the year
Bring me bliss,
Globing Honey Moons
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times
From the night.
Young again you grow
Out of sight.

THE RING

Silver crescent-curve,
Coming soon,
Globe again, and make
Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,
Moon, with you,
For ten thousand years
Old and new?

FATHER. And who was he with such love-
drunken eyes

They made a thousand honey moons of one?

MIRIAM. The prophet of his own, my
Hubert—his

The words, and mine the setting. ‘Air and
Words,’

Said Hubert, when I sang the song, ‘are bride
And bridegroom.’ Does it please you?

FATHER. Mainly, child,
Because I hear your Mother’s voice in yours.
She——, why, you shiver tho’ the wind is west
With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM. Well, I felt
On a sudden I know not what, a breath that
past
With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*). Even so.
The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once was
Man,

THE RING

But cannot wholly free itself from Man,
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn
Stranger than earth has ever seen ; the veil
Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,
But thro' the Will of One who knows and
rules—

And utter knowledge is but utter love—
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening height,
An ever lessening earth—and she perhaps,
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link
With me to-day.

MIRIAM. You speak so low, what is it ?
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a new link
Breaking an old one ?

FATHER. No, for we, my child,
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.

MIRIAM. And you the lifelong guardian of
the child.

FATHER. I, and one other whom you have
not known.

MIRIAM. And who ? what other ?

FATHER. Whither are you bound ?
For Naples which we only left in May ?

MIRIAM. No ! father, Spain, but Hubert
brings me home
With April and the swallow. Wish me joy !

FATHER. What need to wish when Hubert
weds in you

THE RING

The heart of Love, and you the soul of Truth
In Hubert ?

MIRIAM. Tho' you used to call me once
The lonely maiden-Princess of the wood,
Who meant to sleep her hundred summers out
Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER. Ay, but now
Your fairy Prince has found you, take this ring.

MIRIAM. 'Io t' amo'—and these diamonds—
beautiful !
'From Walter,' and for me from you then ?

FATHER. Well,
One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM. Miriam am I not ?

FATHER. This ring bequeath'd you by your
mother, child,
Was to be given you—such her dying wish—
Given on the morning when you came of age
Or on the day you married. Both the days
Now close in one. The ring is doubly yours.
Why do you look so gravely at the tower ?

MIRIAM. I never saw it yet so all ablaze
With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,
And all ablaze too in the lake below !
And how the birds that circle round the tower
Are cheeping to each other of their flight
To summer lands !

FATHER. And that has made you grave ?
Fly—care not. Birds and brides must leave the
nest.

THE RING

Child, I am happier in your happiness
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM. It is not that !

FATHER. What else?

MIRIAM. That chamber in the tower.

FATHER. What chamber, child ?

Your nurse is here?

MIRIAM. My Mother's nurse and mine.
She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

FATHER. What did she say?

MIRIAM. She said, that you and I
Had been abroad for my poor health so long
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I ask'd
About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy hair
Is golden like thy Mother's, not so fine.'

FATHER. What then? what more?

MIRIAM. She said—perhaps indeed
She wander'd, having wander'd now so far
Beyond the common date of death—that you,
When I was smaller than the statuette
Of my dear Mother on your bracket here—
You took me to that chamber in the tower,
The topmost—a chest there, by which you
knelt—

And there were books and dresses—left to me,
A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she said,
I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd my hands
As if I saw her ; then a woman came
And caught me from my nurse. I hear her yet—
A sound of anger like a distant storm.

THE RING

FATHER. Garrulous old crone.

MIRIAM. Poor nurse !

FATHER. I bad her keep,
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the ring,
For I myself would tell you all to-day.

MIRIAM. 'She too might speak to-day,' she
mumbled. Still,
I scarce have learnt the title of your book,
But you will turn the pages.

FATHER. Ay, to-day !
I brought you to that chamber on your third
September birthday with your nurse, and felt
An icy breath play on me, while I stoopt
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM. This very ring
Io t' amo ?

FATHER. Yes, for some wild hope was mine
That, in the misery of my married life,
Miriam your Mother might appear to me.
She came to you, not me. The storm, you
hear

Far-off, is Muriel—your stepmother's voice.

MIRIAM. Vext, that you thought my Mother
came to me ?
Or at my crying 'Mother' ? or to find
My Mother's diamonds hidden from her there,
Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not shown
To dazzle all that see them ?

FATHER. Wait a while.
Your Mother and step-mother—Miriam Erne
And Muriel Erne—the two were cousins—lived

THE RING

With Muriel's mother on the down, that sees
A thousand squares of corn and meadow, far
As the gray deep, a landscape which your eyes
Have many a time ranged over when a babe.

MIRIAM. I climb'd the hill with Hubert
yesterday,
And from the thousand squares, one silent voice
Came on the wind, and seem'd to say 'Again.'
We saw far off an old forsaken house,
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER. And there
I found these cousins often by the brook,
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw the
fly ;

The girls of equal age, but one was fair,
And one was dark, and both were beautiful.
No voice for either spoke within my heart
Then, for the surface eye, that only doats
On outward beauty, glancing from the one
To the other, knew not that which pleased it
most,

The raven ringlet or the gold ; but both
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to walk
This Terrace—morbid, melancholy ; mine
And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the field ;
For all that ample woodland whisper'd 'debt,'
The brook that feeds this lakelet murmur'd
'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober rook
And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage.'

THE RING

MIRIAM. Father's fault
Visited on the children !

FATHER. Ay, but then
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to Rome—
He left me wealth—and while I journey'd hence,
And saw the world fly by me like a dream,
And while I communed with my truest self,
I woke to all of truest in myself,
Till, in the gleam of those mid-summer dawns,
The form of Muriel faded, and the face
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew ;
And past and future mix'd in Heaven and made
The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

MIRIAM. So glad ? no tear for him, who left
you wealth,
Your kinsman ?

FATHER. I had seen the man but once ;
He loved my name not me ; and then I pass'd
Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,
So far gone down, or so far up in life,
That he was nearing his own hundred, sold
This ring to me, then laugh'd ' the ring is weird.'
And weird and worn and wizard-like was he.
' Why weird ? ' I ask'd him ; and he said ' The
souls

Of two repentant Lovers guard the ring '
Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak eyes—
' And if you give the ring to any maid,
They still remember what it cost them here,
And bind the maid to love you by the ring ;
And if the ring were stolen from the maid,

THE RING

The theft were death or madness to the thief,
So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold the gift.'
And then he told their legend :

‘Long ago
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale
Had quarrell’d, till the man repenting sent
This ring “Io t’ amo” to his best beloved,
And sent it on her birthday. She in wrath
Return’d it on her birthday, and that day
His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the ring,
He wildly fought a rival suitor, him
The causer of that scandal, fought and fell ;
And she that came to part them all too late,
And found a corpse and silence, drew the ring
From his dead finger, wore it till her death,
Shrined him within the temple of her heart,
Made every moment of her after life
A virgin victim to his memory,
And dying rose, and rear’d her arms, and cried
“I see him, Io t’ amo, Io t’ amo.”’

MIRIAM. Legend or true? so tender should
be true !
Did *he* believe it? did you ask him ?

FATHER. Ay !
But that half skeleton, like a barren ghost
From out the fleshless world of spirits, laugh’d :
A hollow laughter !

MIRIAM. Vile, so near the ghost
Himself, to laugh at love in death ! But you ?

FATHER. Well, as the bygone lover thro’ this
ring

THE RING

Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I
Would call thro' this 'Io t' amo' to the heart
Of Miriam ; then I bad the man engrave
'From Walter' on the ring, and send it—wrote
Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but he—
Some younger hand must have engraven the
ring—

His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost
Of seven and ninety winters, that he scrawl'd
A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel' ;
And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I meant
For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted it
Before that other whom I loved and love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a minster there,
A galleried palace, or a battlefield,
Where stood the sheaf of Peace : but—coming
home—

And on your Mother's birthday—all but yours—
A week betwixt—and when the tower as now
Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,
And all ablaze too plunging in the lake
Head-foremost—who were those that stood
between

The tower and that rich phantom of the tower ?
Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and like
May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it they ?
A light shot upward on them from the lake.
What sparkled there ? whose hand was that ?
they stood

So close together. I am not keen of sight,
But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—

THE RING

‘O Miriam ! have you given your ring to her ?
O Miriam !’ Miriam reddened, Muriel clenched
The hand that wore it, till I cried again :
‘O Miriam, if you love me take the ring !’
She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was mute.
‘Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.’
Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—
She turned, and in her soft imperial way
And saying gently : ‘Muriel, by your leave,’
Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the ring,
And gave it me, who passed it down her own,
‘Io t’ amo, all is well then.’ Muriel fled.

MIRIAM. Poor Muriel !

FATHER. Ay, poor Muriel when you hear
What follows ! Miriam loved me from the first,
Not thro’ the ring ; but on her marriage-morn
This birthday, death-day, and betrothal ring,
Laid on her table overnight, was gone ;
And after hours of search and doubt and threats,
And hubbub, Muriel entered with it, ‘See !—
Found in a chink of that old mouldered floor !’
My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,
As who should say ‘that those who lose can
find.’

Then I and she were married for a year,
One year without a storm, or even a cloud ;
And you my Miriam born within the year ;
And she my Miriam dead within the year.

I sat beside her dying, and she gasped :
‘The books, the miniature, the lace are hers,
My ring too when she comes of age, or when

THE RING

She marries ; you—you loved me, kept your word.

You love me still “Io t’ amo.”—Muriel—no—

She cannot love ; she loves her own hard self,
Her firm will, her fix’d purpose. Promise me,
Miriam not Muriel—she shall have the ring.’

And there the light of other life, which lives
Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,
Gleam’d for a moment in her own on earth.

I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss
Upon them, closed her eyes, which would not
close,

But kept their watch upon the ring and you.

Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor Mother !

And you, poor desolate Father, and poor me,
The little senseless, worthless, wordless babe,
Saved when your life was wreck’d !

FATHER.

Desolate ? yes !

Desolate as that sailor, whom the storm
Had parted from his comrade in the boat,
And dash’d half dead on barren sands, was I.

Nay, you were my one solace ; only—you
Were always ailing. Muriel’s mother sent,
And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came
And saw you, shook her head, and patted yours,
And smiled, and making with a kindly pinch
Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose—

‘*That* should be fix’d,’ she said ; ‘your pretty
bud,

So blighted here, would flower into full health

THE RING

Among our heath and bracken. Let her come !
And we will feed her with our mountain air,
And send her home to you rejoicing.' No—
We could not part. And once, when you my
girl

Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny fist
Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's grave—
By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she said,
'Among the tombs in this damp vale of yours !
You scorn my Mother's warning, but the child
Is paler than before. We often walk
In open sun, and see beneath our feet
The mist of autumn gather from your lake,
And shroud the tower ; and once we only saw
Your gilded vane, a light above the mist'—
(Our old bright bird that still is veering there
Above his four gold letters) 'and the light,'
She said, 'was like that light'—and there she
paused,

And long ; till I believing that the girl's
Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find
One likeness, laugh'd a little and found her two—
'A warrior's crest above the cloud of war'—
'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,
The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she said, the
light

That glimmers on the marsh and on the grave.'
And spoke no more, but turn'd and pass'd away.

Miriam, I am not surely one of those
Caught by the flower that closes on the fly,
But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,

THE RING

In aiming at an all but hopeless mark
To strike it, struck ; I took, I left you there ;
I came, I went, was happier day by day ;
For Muriel nursed you with a mother's care ;
Till on that clear and heather-scented height
The rounder cheek had brighten'd into bloom.
She always came to meet me carrying you,
And all her talk was of the babe she loved ;
So, following her old pastime of the brook,
She threw the fly for me ; but oftener left
That angling to the mother. ' Muriel's health
Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam. Strange !
She used to shun the wailing babe, and doats
On this of yours.' But when the matron saw
That hinted love was only wasted bait,
Not risen to, she was bolder. ' Ever since
You sent the fatal ring'—I told her ' sent
To Miriam,' ' Doubtless—ay, but ever since
In all the world my dear one sees but you—
In your sweet babe she finds but you—she makes
Her heart a mirror that reflects but you.'
And then the tear fell, the voice broke. *Her*
heart !

I gazed into the mirror, as a man
Who sees his face in water, and a stone,
That glances from the bottom of the pool,
Strike upward thro' the shadow ; yet at last,
Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep
So skilled a nurse about you always—nay !
Some half remorseful kind of pity too—
Well ! well, you know I married Muriel Erne.

THE RING

‘I take thee Muriel for my wedded wife’—
I had forgotten it was your birthday, child—
When all at once with some electric thrill
A cold air pass’d between us, and the hands
Fell from each other, and were join’d again.

No second cloudless honeymoon was mine.
For by and by she sicken’d of the farce,
She dropt the gracious mask of motherhood,
She came no more to meet me, carrying you,
Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,
Nor ever cheer’d you with a kindly smile,
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring ;
Why had I sent the ring at first to her ?
Why had I made her love me thro’ the ring,
And then had changed ? so fickle are men—
the best !

Not she—but now my love was hers again,
The ring by right, she said, was hers again.
At times too shrilling in her angrier moods,
‘That weak and watery nature love you ?
No !

“*Io t’ amo, Io t’ amo*” !’ flung herself
Against my heart, but often while her lips
Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,
As from the grating of a sepulchre,
Past over both. I told her of my vow,
No pliable idiot I to break my vow ;
But still she made her outcry for the ring ;
For one monotonous fancy madden’d her,
Till I myself was madden’d with her cry,

THE RING

And even that 'Io t' amo,' those three sweet Italian words, became a weariness.

My people too were scared with eerie sounds,
A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,
A noise of falling weights that never fell,
Weird whispers, bells that rang without a hand,
Door-handles turn'd when none was at the door,
And bolted doors that open'd of themselves :
And one betwixt the dark and light had seen
Her, bending by the cradle of her babe.

MIRIAM. And I remember once that being
waked

By noises in the house—and no one near—
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and pass'd,
And I was quieted, and slept again.
Or is it some half memory of a dream ?

FATHER. Your fifth September birthday.

MIRIAM. And the face,
The hand,—my Mother.

FATHER. Miriam, on that day
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale—
Mere want of gold—and still for twenty years
Bound by the golden cord of their first love—
Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to share
Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler then
Than ever you were in your cradle, moan'd,
'I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,
I cannot go, go you.' And then she rose,
She clung to me with such a hard embrace,

THE RING

So lingeringly long, that half-amazed
I parted from her, and I went alone.
And when the bridegroom murmur'd, 'With
this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the key,
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.

I kept it as a sacred amulet
About me,—gone ! and gone in that embrace !
Then, hurrying home, I found her not in
house

Or garden—up the tower—an icy air
Fled by me.—There, the chest was open—all
The sacred relics tost about the floor—
Among them Muriel lying on her face—
I raised her, call'd her 'Muriel, Muriel wake !'
The fatal ring lay near her ; the glazed eye
Glared at me as in horror. Dead ! I took
And chafed the freezing hand. A red mark ran
All round one finger pointed straight, the rest
Were crumpled inwards. Dead !—and maybe
stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn the ring—
Then torn it from her finger, or as if—
For never had I seen her show remorse—
As if—

MIRIAM. —those two Ghost lovers—

FATHER. Lovers yet—

MIRIAM. Yes, yes !

FATHER. —but dead so long, gone up so far,
That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd
Or lost the moment of their past on earth,

THE RING

As we forget our wail at being born.

As if—

MIRIAM. a dearer ghost had—

FATHER. —wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM. Had floated in with sad reproachful
eyes,

Till from her own hand she had torn the ring
In fright, and fallen dead. And I myself
Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER. Well, no more !

No bridal music this ! but fear not you !

You have the ring she guarded ; that poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her free,

Except that, still drawn downward for an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church, where she

Was married too, may linger, till she sees

Her maiden coming like a Queen, who leaves

Some colder province in the North to gain

Her capital city, where the loyal bells

Clash welcome—linger, till her own, the babe

She lean'd to from her Spiritual sphere,

Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd with
flowers,

Has enter'd on the larger woman-world

Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—

Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child and go.

FORLORN

I

‘ HE is fled—I wish him dead—
He that wrought my ruin—
O the flattery and the craft
Which were my undoing . . .
In the night, in the night,
When the storms are blowing.

II

‘ Who was witness of the crime ?
Who shall now reveal it ?
He is fled, or he is dead,
Marriage will conceal it . . .
In the night, in the night,
While the gloom is growing.’

III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,
What is this you’re dreaming ?
There is laughter down in Hell
At your simple scheming . . .
In the night, in the night,
When the ghosts are fleeing.

FORLORN

IV

You to place a hand in his
Like an honest woman's,
You that lie with wasted lungs
Waiting for your summons . . .
In the night, O the night !
O the deathwatch beating !

V

There will come a witness soon
Hard to be confuted,
All the world will hear a voice
Scream you are polluted . . .
In the night ! O the night,
When the owls are wailing !

VI

Shame and marriage, Shame and marriage,
Fright and foul dissembling,
Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,
Tower and altar trembling . . .
In the night, O the night,
When the mind is failing !

FORLORN

VII

Mother, dare you kill your child ?
How your hand is shaking !
Daughter of the seed of Cain,
What is this you're taking ? . . .
In the night, O the night,
While the house is sleeping.

VIII

Dreadful ! has it come to this,
O unhappy creature ?
You that would not tread on a worm
For your gentle nature . . .
In the night, O the night,
O the night of weeping !

IX

Murder would not veil your sin,
Marriage will not hide it,
Earth and Hell will brand your name
Wretch you must abide it . . .
In the night, O the night,
Long before the dawning.

FORLORN

X

Up, get up, and tell him all,
Tell him you were lying !
Do not die with a lie in your mouth,
You that know you're dying . . .
In the night, O the night,
While the grave is yawning.

XI

No—you will not die before,
Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger ;
You will live till *that* is born,
Then a little longer . . .
In the night, O the night,
While the Fiend is prowling.

XII

Death and marriage, Death and marriage !
Funeral hearses rolling !
Black with bridal favours mixt !
Bridal bells with tolling ! . . .
In the night, O the night,
When the wolves are howling.

FORLORN

XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,
Tell him now or never !
Tell him all before you die,
Lest you die for ever . . .
In the night, O the night,
Where there's no forgetting.

XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,
All her tale of sadness,
Blister'd every word with tears,
And eased her heart of madness . . .
In the night, and nigh the dawn,
And while the moon was setting.

HAPPY

THE LEPER'S BRIDE

I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what is it
that you fear?

Is he sick your mate like mine? have you
lost him, is he fled?

And there—the heron rises from his watch
beside the mere,

And flies above the leper's hut, where lives the
living-dead.

II

Come back, nor let me know it! would he
live and die alone?

And has he not forgiven me yet, his over-
jealous bride,

Who am, and was, and will be his, his own and
only own,

To share his living death with him, die with
him side by side?

HAPPY

III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary moor,
Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and wears
the leper's weed?
The door is open. He! is he standing at the
door,
My soldier of the Cross? it is he and he
indeed!

IV

My roses—will he take them *now*—mine, his—
from off the tree
We planted both together, happy in our
marriage morn?
O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought Thy
fight for Thee,
And Thou hast made him leper to compass
him with scorn—

V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the coward
and the base,
And set a crueller mark than Cain's on him,
the good and brave!
He sees me, waves me from him. I will front
him face to face.
You need not wave me from you. I would
leap into your grave.

* * * *

HAPPY

VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the
conquering sword,
The roses that you cast aside—once more I
bring you these.
No nearer ? do you scorn me when you tell me,
O my lord,
You would not mar the beauty of your bride
with your disease.

VII

You say your body is so foul—then here I stand
apart,
Who yearn to lay my loving head upon your
leprous breast.
The leper plague may scale my skin but never
taint my heart ;
Your body is not foul to me, and body is foul
at best.

VIII

I loved you first when young and fair, but now
I love you most ;
The fairest flesh at last is filth on which the
worm will feast ;
This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy human
ghost,
This house with all its hateful needs no cleaner
than the beast,

HAPPY

IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which in Eden
 was divine,
 This Satan-haunted ruin, this little city of
 sewers,
This wall of solid flesh that comes between your
 soul and mine,
 Will vanish and give place to the beauty
 that endures,

X

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual height,
 When we shall stand transfigured, like Christ
 on Hermon hill,
And moving each to music, soul in soul and
 light in light,
 Shall flash thro' one another in a moment as
 we will.

XI

Foul ! foul ! the word was yours not mine, I
 worship that right hand
 Which fell'd the foes before you as the wood-
 man fells the wood,
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back the
 sun of Holy land,
And clove the Moslem crescent moon, and
 changed it into blood.

HAPPY

XII

And once I worshipt all too well this creature of
decay,
For Age will chink the face, and Death will
freeze the supplest limbs—
Yet you in your mid manhood—O the grief
when yesterday
They bore the Cross before you to the chant
of funeral hymns.

XIII

‘Libera me, Domine!’ you sang the Psalm,
and when
The Priest pronounced you dead, and flung
the mould upon your feet,
A beauty came upon your face, not that of
living men,
But seen upon the silent brow when life has
ceased to beat.

XIV

‘Libera *nos*, Domine’—you knew not one was
there
Who saw you kneel beside your bier, and
weeping scarce could see;
May I come a little nearer, I that heard, and
changed the prayer
And sang the married ‘*nos*’ for the solitary
‘me.’

HAPPY

xv

My beauty marred by you ? by you ! so be it.
All is well
If I lose it and myself in the higher beauty,
yours.
My beauty lured that falcon from his eyry on
the fell,
Who never caught one gleam of the beauty
which endures—

xvi

The Count who sought to snap the bond that
link'd us life to life,
Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric loves'—a
little nearer still—
He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves, your Ulric
woos my wife'—
A lie by which he thought he could subdue
me to his will.

xvii

I knew that you were near me when I let him
kiss my brow ;
Did he touch me on the lips ? I was jealous,
anger'd, vain,
And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are you
jealous of me now ?
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave you
pain.

HAPPY

XVIII

You never once accused me, but I wept alone,
 and sigh'd
 In the winter of the Present for the summer
 of the Past ;
That icy winter silence—how it froze you from
 your bride,
 Tho' I made one barren effort to break it at
 the last.

XIX

I brought you, you remember, these roses, when
 I knew
 You were parting for the war, and you took
 them tho' you frown'd ;
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them. All at
 once the trumpet blew,
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and you
 hurl'd them to the ground.

XX

You parted for the Holy War without a word
 to me,
 And clear myself unask'd—not I. My nature
 was too proud.
And him I saw but once again, and far away
 was he,
 When I was praying in a storm—the crash
 was long and loud—

HAPPY

XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt from falling
on your head—

Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming
down the fell—

I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from Heaven
had dash'd him dead,

And sent him charr'd and blasted to the
deathless fire of Hell.

XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I repented and
repent,

And trust myself forgiven by the God to
whom I kneel.

A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be content
Till I be leper like yourself, my love, from
head to heel.

XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would slight
our marriage oath :

I held you at that moment even dearer than
before ;

Now God has made you leper in His loving care
for both,

That we might cling together, never doubt
each other more.

HAPPY

XXIV

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead, has join'd
our hands of old ;
If man and wife be but one flesh, let mine be
leprous too,
As dead from all the human race as if beneath
the mould ;
If you be dead, then I am dead, who only live
for you.

XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be follow'd
by the Moon ?
The leech forsake the dying bed for terror of
his life ?
The shadow leave the Substance in the brooding
light of noon ?
Or if *I* had been the leper would you have
left the wife ?

XXVI

Not take them ? Still you wave me off—poor
roses—must I go—
I have worn them year by year—from the
bush we both had set—
What? fling them to you?—well—that were
hardly gracious. No !
Your plague but passes by the touch. A
little nearer yet !

HAPPY

XXVII

There, there ! he buried you, the Priest ; the
Priest is not to blame,
He joins us once again, to his either office
true :
I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss me.
In the name
Of the everlasting God, I will live and die
with you.

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily ; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions : 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded : 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility ; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as

HAPPY

to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words : 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES¹

I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,
Whose eyes have known this globe of ours,
Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,
From Corrientes to Japan,

II

To you that bask below the Line,
I soaking here in winter wet—
The century's three strong eights have met,
To drag me down to seventy-nine.

III

In summer if I reach my day—
To you, yet young, who breathe the balm
Of summer-winters by the palm
And orange grove of Paraguay,

¹ 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

TO ULYSSES

IV

I tolerant of the colder time,
 Who love the winter woods, to trace
 On paler heavens the branching grace
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

V

And see my cedar green, and there
 My giant ilex keeping leaf
 When frost is keen and days are brief—
Or marvel how in English air

VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,
 Altho' the months have scarce begun,
 Has push'd toward our faintest sun
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

VII

Or watch the waving pine which here
 The warrior of Caprera set,¹
 A name that earth will not forget
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

¹ Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

TO ULYSSES

VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light
On broader zones beyond the foam,
But chaining fancy now at home
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you
For your rich gift, your tale of lands
I know not,¹ your Arabian sands ;
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake ;
Your Oriental Eden-isles,²
Where man, nor only Nature smiles ;
Your wonder of the boiling lake ;³

XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,⁴
Phra-bat⁵ the step ; your Pontic coast ;

¹ The tale of Nejd. ² The Philippines. ³ In Dominica.

⁴ The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

⁵ The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

TO ULYSSES

Crag-cloister ;¹ Anatolian Ghost ;²
Hong-Kong,³ Karnac,⁴ and all the rest.

XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line
Your leading hand, and came, my friend,
To prize your various book, and send
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

¹ The monastery of Sumelas.

² Anatolian Spectre stories.

³ The Three Cities.

⁴ Travels in Egypt.

TO MARY BOYLE

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I

‘ SPRING-FLOWERS ’ ! While you still delay to take
Your leave of Town,
Our elmtree’s ruddy-hearted blossom-flake
Is fluttering down.

II

Be truer to your promise. There ! I heard
Our cuckoo call.
Be needle to the magnet of your word,
Nor wait, till all

III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and plain
And garden pass,
And all the gold from each laburnum chain
Drop to the grass.

TO MARY BOYLE

IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,
Dead with the dead ?
For ere she left us, when we met, you prest
My hand, and said

V

‘I come with your spring-flowers.’ You came
not, friend ;
My birds would sing,
You heard not. Take then this spring-flower I
send,
This song of spring,

VI

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own rhyme
By mine old self,
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
Laid on the shelf—

VII

A rhyme that flower’d betwixt the whitening sloe
And kingcup blaze,
And more than half a hundred years ago,
In rick-fire days,

TO MARY BOYLE

VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and paced his
land
In fear of worse,
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand
Fill with *his* purse.

IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the height
By tonguester tricks,
And once—I well remember that red night
When thirty ricks,

X

All flaming, made an English homestead Hell—
These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well
Along the line,

XI

When this bare dome had not begun to gleam
Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,
His girl of girls ;

TO MARY BOYLE

XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with Grief
 Sit face to face,
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief
 In change of place.

XIII

What use to brood ? this life of mingled pains
 And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains
 The Mystery.

XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the wife,
 For ever gone.
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert life
 Without the one.

XV

The silver year should cease to mourn and sigh—
 Not long to wait—
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I
 To that dim gate.

TO MARY BOYLE

XVI

Take, read ! and be the faults your Poet makes
Or many or few,
He rests content, if his young music wakes
A wish in you

XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her realm
Of sound and smoke,
For his clear heaven, and these few lanes of elm
And whispering oak.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

I

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould,
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold
That trembles not to kisses of the bee:
Come, Spring, for now from all the dripping
eaves

The spear of ice has wept itself away,
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine leaves
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the day.
She comes ! The loosen'd rivulets run ;
The frost-bead melts upon her golden hair ;
Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching leaves her
bare
To breaths of balmier air ;

II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,
The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
While round her brows a woodland culver flits,
Watching her large light eyes and gracious
looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon sits
Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks.
Come, Spring ! She comes on waste and wood,
On farm and field : but enter also here,
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,
And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
Lodge with me all the year !

III

Once more a downy drift against the brakes,
Self-darken'd in the sky, descending slow !
But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes
Yon blanching apricot like snow in snow.
These will thine eyes not brook in forest-paths,
On their perpetual pine, nor round the beech ;
They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,
Solved in the tender blushes of the peach ;
They lose themselves and die
On that new life that gems the hawthorn line ;
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,
And out once more in varnish'd glory shine
Thy stars of celandine.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven lours,
But in the tearful splendour of her smiles
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut towers
Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.
Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her hand ;
Her light makes rainbows in my closing eyes,
I hear a charm of song thro' all the land.
Come, Spring ! She comes, and Earth is glad
To roll her North below thy deepening dome,
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,
And these low bushes dip their twigs in foam,
Make all true hearths thy home.

V

Across my garden ! and the thicket stirs,
The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,
The starling claps his tiny castanets.
Still round her forehead wheels the woodland dove,
And scatters on her throat the sparks of dew,
The kingcup fills her footprint, and above
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue.
Hail ample presence of a Queen,
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
Whose mantle, every shade of glancing green,
Flies back in fragrant breezes to display
A tunic white as May !

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

VI

She whispers, ' From the South I bring you balm,
For on a tropic mountain was I born,
While some dark dweller by the coco-palm
Watch'd my fair meadow zoned with airy
morn ;
From under rose a muffled moan of floods ;
I sat beneath a solitude of snow ;
There no one came, the turf was fresh, the
woods
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales
below.
I saw beyond their silent tops
The steaming marshes of the scarlet cranes,
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove copse,
And summer basking in the sultry plains
About a land of canes ;

VII

' Then from my vapour-girdle soaring forth
I scaled the buoyant highway of the birds,
And drank the dews and drizzle of the North,
That I might mix with men, and hear their
words
On pathway'd plains ; for—while my hand
exults
Within the bloodless heart of lowly flowers

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

To work old laws of Love to fresh results,
Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—
I too would teach the man
Beyond the darker hour to see the bright,
That his fresh life may close as it began,
The still-fulfilling promise of a light
Narrowing the bounds of night.'

VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may mark
The coming year's great good and varied ills,
And new developments, whatever spark
Be struck from out the clash of warring wills ;
Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,
The smoke of war's volcano burst again
From hoary deeps that belt the changeful West,
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings of men ;
Or should those fail, that hold the helm,
While the long day of knowledge grows and
warms,
And in the heart of this most ancient realm
A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms
Sounding 'To arms ! to arms !'

IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn
Who reads thy gradual process, Holy Spring.
Thy leaves possess the season in their turn,
And in their time thy warblers rise on wing.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

How surely glidest thou from March to May,
And changest, breathing it, the sullen wind,
Thy scope of operation, day by day,

Larger and fuller, like the human mind !
Thy warmths from bud to bud

Accomplish that blind model in the seed,
And men have hopes, which race the restless
blood,

That after many changes may succeed
Life, which is Life indeed.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

I

O YOUNG Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic !
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated The Gleam.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven
 who crost it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic,
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd
'Follow The Gleam.'

IV

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

v

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labour,
Slided The Gleam—

VI

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

Of Arthur the king ;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flash'd on the Tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot ;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die ;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned
to a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to
a melody
Yearningly tender,

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world ;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom ;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came——
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

IX

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight !
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

‘I read Hayley’s Life of Romney the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter ; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life ! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that “marriage spoilt an artist” almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life ; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney’s pictures ! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.’ (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, vol. i.)

‘BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this’

Who are you ? What ! the Lady Hamilton ?
Good, I am never weary painting you.
To sit once more ? Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,
Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—
Bacchante, what you will ; and if I fail
To conjure and concentrate into form
And colour all you are, the fault is less
In me than Art. What Artist ever yet
Could make pure light live on the canvas ? Art !
Why should I so disrelish that short word ?

Where am I ? snow on all the hills ! so hot,
So fever’d ! never colt would more delight

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

To roll himself in meadow grass than I
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired ? or came of your own
will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn ?
Have I not met you somewhere long ago ?
I am all but sure I have—in Kendal church—
O yes ! I hired you for a season there,
And then we parted ; but you look so kind
That you will not deny my sultry throat
One draught of icy water. There—you spill
The drops upon my forehead. Your hand shakes.
I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are they
tears ?

For me—they do me too much grace—for me ?
O Mary, Mary !

Vexing you with words !

Words only, born of fever, or the fumes
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,—words,
Wild babble. I have stumbled back again
Into the common day, the sounder self.
God stay me there, if only for your sake,
The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted wife
That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,
That wife and children drag an Artist down !
This seem'd my lodestar in the Heaven of Art,
And lured me from the household fire on earth.
To you my days have been a life-long lie,
Grafted on half a truth ; and tho' you say

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

'Take comfort you have won the Painter's fame,'
The best in me that sees the worst in me,
And groans to see it, finds no comfort there.

What fame? I am not Raphaël, Titian—no
Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.
Wrong there! The painter's fame? but mine,
that grew
Blown into glittering by the popular breath,
May float awhile beneath the sun, may roll
The rainbow hues of heaven about it—

There!

The colour'd bubble bursts above the abyss
Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame with me
To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen
To flame along another dreary day.
Your hand. How bright you keep your
marriage-ring!
Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then
Bred this black mood? or am I conscious, more
Than other Masters, of the chasm between
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom of Age
And suffering cloud the height I stand upon
Even from myself? stand? stood . . . no more.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

And yet
The world would lose, if such a wife as you
Should vanish unrecorded. Might I crave
One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim
On your obedience, and my strongest wish
Falls flat before your least unwillingness.
Still would you—if it please you—sit to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear summer noon,
When seated on a rock, and foot to foot
With your own shadow in the placid lake,
You claspt our infant daughter, heart to heart.
I had been among the hills, and brought you
down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this you twined
About her cap. I see the picture yet,
Mother and child. A sound from far away,
No louder than a bee among the flowers,
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.
You still'd it for the moment with a song
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.
You should have been—I might have made you
once,

Had I but known you as I know you now—
The true Alcestis of the time. Your song—
Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof
That I—even I—at times remember'd *you*.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

‘Beat upon mine, little heart ! beat, beat !
Beat upon mine ! you are mine, my sweet !
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your
feet,

My sweet.’

Less profile ! turn to me—three-quarter face.

‘Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss !
For I give you this, and I give you this !
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a kiss !
Sleep !’

Too early blinded by the kiss of death—

‘Father and Mother will watch you grow’—

You watch’d not I, she did not grow, she died.

‘Father and Mother will watch you grow,
And gather the roses whenever they blow,
And find the white heather wherever you go,
My sweet.’

Ah, my white heather only blooms in heaven
With Milton’s amaranth. There, there, there !
a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle tools,

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

Stamp't into dust—tremulous, all awry,
Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool,—
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that harlot-like
Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-like,
Who love her still, and whimper, impotent
To win her back before I die—and then—
Then, in the loud world's bastard judgment-day,
One truth will damn me with the mindless mob,
Who feel no touch of my temptation, more
Than all the myriad lies, that blacken round
The corpse of every man that gains a name ;
' This model husband, this fine Artist ' ! Fool,
What matters ? Six foot deep of burial mould
Will dull their comments ! Ay, but when the
shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven, and throbs
Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He* should ask
' Why left you wife and children ? for my sake,
According to my word ? ' and I replied
' Nay, Lord, for *Art*, ' why, that would sound so
mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom of Hell
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless Mussulman
Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the sea,
Would turn, and glare at me, and point and jeer,
And gibber at the worm, who, living, made
The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost
Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again !
The coals of fire you heap upon my head

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

Have crazed me. Someone knocking there
without?

No ! Will my Indian brother come ? to find
Me or my coffin ? Should I know the man ?
This worn-out Reason dying in her house
May leave the windows blinded, and if so,
Bid him farewell for me, and tell him—

Hope !

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper ' Hope.'
" The miserable have no medicine
But only Hope ! " He said it . . . in the play.
His crime was of the senses ; of the mind
Mine ; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—

O let me lean my head upon your breast.
' Beat little heart ' on this fool brain of mine.
I once had friends—and many—none like you.
I love you more than when we married. Hope !
O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—
For you forgive me, you are sure of that—
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum.—HORACE.

I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over the
sacred fountain ?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised to the
heights of the mountain,

And over the flight of the Ages ! O Goddesses,
help me up thither !

Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Cæsar, but
mine would not wither.

Steep is the mountain, but you, you will help
me to overcome it,

And stand with my head in the zenith, and roll
my voice from the summit,

Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth and her
listening nations,

And mixt with the great Sphere-music of stars
and of constellations.

PARNASSUS

II

What be those two shapes high over the sacred
fountain,
Taller than all the Muses, and huger than all
the mountain ?
On those two known peaks they stand ever
spreading and heightening ;
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by more
than lightning !
Look, in their deep double shadow the crown'd
ones all disappearing !
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope for a
deathless hearing !
'Sounding for ever and ever ?' pass on ! the
sight confuses—
These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible
Muses !

III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure
Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need the singer
greatly care ?
Other songs for other worlds ! the fire within
him would not falter ;
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is
Homer there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of
a man,
And the man said 'Am I your debtor?'
And the Lord—'Not yet : but make it as clean
as you can,
And then I will let you a better.'

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain,
or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses while the sun
of morning shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in
my stable,
Youth and Health, and birth and wealth, and
choice of women and of wines?

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age,
save breaking my bones on the rack?
Would I had past in the morning that looks
so bright from afar!

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

OLD AGE

Done for thee ? starved the wild beast that was
linkt with thee eighty years back.
Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that
hangs on a star.

I

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat
finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the
royal voice be mute ?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from
the throne,
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy
Province of the brute.

II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze
at a field in the Past,
Where I sank with the body at times in the
sloughs of a low desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is
quiet at last
As he stands on the heights of his life with
a glimpse of a height that is higher.

FAR—FAR—AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he
knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own
hue,

Far—far—away ?

What sound was dearest in his native dells ?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when
a boy,
Far—far—away ?

A whisper from his dawn of life ? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far—far—away ?

FAR—FAR—AWAY

Far, far, how far ? from o'er the gates of Birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far—far—away ?

What charm in words, a charm no words could
give ?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far—far—away ?

POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always move,
Nor always on the plain,
And if we move to such a goal
As Wisdom hopes to gain,
Then you that drive, and know your Craft,
Will firmly hold the rein,
Nor lend an ear to random cries,
Or you may drive in vain,
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry 'Slow,'
But, while the hills remain,
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,
Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.

BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of European
 confusion,
O you with your passionate shriek for the rights
 of an equal humanity,
How often your Re-volution has proven but
 E-volution
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of a civic
 insanity !

THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in your May,
Two words, '*My Rose*' set all your face aglow,
And now that I am white, and you are gray,
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,
Blooms in the Past, but close to me to-day
As this red rose, which on our terrace here
Glow in the blue of fifty miles away.

THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with
 woe

 You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
 In some fifth Act what this wild Drama means.

ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN
EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are incomplete,
I prize that soul where man and woman meet,
Which types all Nature's male and female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN
THE ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross, and thence
maintain
Our darker future. May your fears be vain !
At times the small black fly upon the pane
May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes
February fair-maid !

THE THROSTLE

‘SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.

I know it, I know it, I know it.

Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,’

Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.

Last year you sang it as gladly.

‘New, new, new, new’ ! Is it then *so* new

That you should carol so madly ?

‘Love again, song again, nest again, young again,’

Never a prophet so crazy !

And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,

See, there is hardly a daisy.

‘Here again, here, here, here, happy year’ !

O warble unchidden, unbidden !

Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,

And all the winters are hidden.

THE OAK

LIVE thy Life,
 Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
 Living gold ;

Summer-rich
 Then ; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
 Gold again.

All his leaves
 Fall'n at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
 Naked strength.

IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose living like I shall not find,
Whose Faith and Work were bells of full
accord,
My friend, the most unworldly of mankind,
Most generous of all Ultramontanes, Ward,
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind with
mind,
How loyal in the following of thy Lord !

THE DEATH OF ŒNONE
AND OTHER POEMS

JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER

To E. T.

THERE on the top of the down,
The wild heather round me and over me June's
 high blue,
When I look'd at the bracken so bright and the
 heather so brown,
I thought to myself I would offer this book to
 you,
This, and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,
With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-
 blue heaven,
And a fancy as summer-new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of
 the heather.

TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

I

DEAR Master in our classic town,
You, loved by all the younger gown
 There at Balliol,
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

II

And read a Grecian tale re-told,
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,
 Quintus Calaber
Somewhat lazily handled of old ;

III

And on this white midwinter day—
For have the far-off hymns of May,
 All her melodies,
All her harmonies echo'd away ?—

TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

IV

To-day, before you turn again
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,
 Hear my cataract's
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

V

Till, led by dream and vague desire,
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,
 Find her warrior
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

THE DEATH OF CENONE

CENONE sat within the cave from out
Whose ivy-matted mouth she used to gaze
Down at the Troad ; but the goodly view
Was now one blank, and all the serpent vines
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had risen,
And gliding thro' the branches overbower'd
The naked Three, were wither'd long ago,
And thro' the sunless winter morning-mist
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth.

And while she stared at those dead cords that
ran

Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to tree,
But once were gayer than a dawning sky
With many a pendent bell and fragrant star,
Her Past became her Present, and she saw
Him, climbing toward her with the golden fruit,
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,
Her husband in the flush of youth and dawn,
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God.

Anon from out the long ravine below,
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at first
Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead

THE DEATH OF CENONE

When driven to Hades, but, in coming near,
Across the downward thunder of the brook
Sounded 'Cenone'; and on a sudden he,
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the mist
Rose, like the wraith of his dead self, and moan'd
'Cenone, *my* Cenone, while we dwelt
Together in this valley—happy then—
Too happy had I died within thine arms,
Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our peace,
And sunder'd each from each. I am dying now
Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me. Thou
knowest,

Taught by some God, whatever herb or balm
May clear the blood from poison, and thy fame
Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee
The shepherd brings his adder-bitten lamb,
The wounded warrior climbs from Troy to thee.
My life and death are in thy hand. The Gods
Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer
For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.
I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou forgive,
Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.
Cenone, by thy love which once was mine,
Help, heal me. I am poison'd to the heart.'
'And I to mine' she said 'Adulterer,
Go back to thine adulteress and die!'

He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist at once
Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,
But, ere the mountain rolls into the plain,

THE DEATH OF ÆNONE

Fell headlong dead ; and of the shepherds one
Their oldest, and the same who first had found
Paris, a naked babe, among the woods
Of Ida, following lighted on him there,
And shouted, and the shepherds heard and came.

One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the squalid
hair,

One kiss'd his hand, another closed his eyes,
And then, remembering the gay playmate rear'd
Among them, and forgetful of the man,
Whose crime had half unpeopled Ilion, these
All that day long labour'd, hewing the pines,
And built their shepherd-prince a funeral pile ;
And, while the star of eve was drawing light
From the dead sun, kindled the pyre, and all
Stood round it, hush'd, or calling on his name.

But when the white fog vanish'd like a ghost
Before the day, and every topmost pine
Spired into bluest heaven, still in her cave,
Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon
By ghastlier than the Gorgon head, a face,—
His face deform'd by lurid blotch and blain—
There, like a creature frozen to the heart
Beyond all hope of warmth, Ænone sat
Not moving, till in front of that ravine
Which drowsed in gloom, self-darken'd from
the west,

The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy.

Then her head sank, she slept, and thro' her
dream

A ghostly murmur floated, ' Come to me,

THE DEATH OF CENONE

Cenone ! I can wrong thee now no more,
Cenone, my Cenone,' and the dream
Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath the stars.

What star could burn so low ? not Ilion yet.
What light was there ? She rose and slowly
down,

By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,
Paced, following, as in trance, the silent cry.
She waked a bird of prey that scream'd and past ;
She roused a snake that hissing writhed away ;
A panther sprang across her path, she heard
The shriek of some lost life among the pines,
But when she gain'd the broader vale, and saw
The ring of faces redden'd by the flames
Enfolding that dark body which had lain
Of old in her embrace, paused—and then ask'd
Falteringly, ' Who lies on yonder pyre ? '
But every man was mute for reverence.
Then moving quickly forward till the heat
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice
Of shrill command, ' Who burns upon the
pyre ? '

Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,
' He, whom thou wouldst not heal ! ' and all at
once

The morning light of happy marriage broke
Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,
And muffling up her comely head, and crying
' Husband ! ' she leapt upon the funeral pile,
And mixt herself with *him* and past in fire.

ST. TELEMACHUS

HAD the fierce ashes of some fiery peak
Been hurl'd so high they ranged about the
globe ?

For day by day, thro' many a blood-red eve,
In that four-hundredth summer after Christ,
The wrathful sunset glared against a cross
Rear'd on the tumbled ruins of an old fane
No longer sacred to the Sun, and flamed
On one huge slope beyond, where in his cave
The man, whose pious hand had built the cross,
A man who never changed a word with men,
Fasted and pray'd, Telemachus the Saint.

Eve after eve that haggard anchorite
Would haunt the desolated fane, and there
Gaze at the ruin, often mutter low
'Vicisti Galilæe' ; louder again,
Spurning a shatter'd fragment of the God,
'Vicisti Galilæe !' but—when now
Bathed in that lurid crimson—ask'd 'Is earth
On fire to the West ? or is the Demon-god
Wroth at his fall ?' and heard an answer 'Wake
Thou deedless dreamer, lazying out a life

ST. TELEMACHUS

Of self-suppression, not of selfless love.'
And once a flight of shadowy fighters crost
The disk, and once, he thought, a shape with
wings
Came sweeping by him, and pointed to the
West,

And at his ear he heard a whisper 'Rome'
And in his heart he cried 'The call of God !'
And call'd arose, and, slowly plunging down
Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face
By waste and field and town of alien tongue,
Following a hundred sunsets, and the sphere
Of westward-wheeling stars ; and every dawn
Struck from him his own shadow on to Rome.

Foot-sore, way-worn, at length he touch'd his
goal,

The Christian city. All her splendour fail'd
To lure those eyes that only yearn'd to see,
Fleeting betwixt her column'd palace-walls,
The shape with wings. Anon there past a crowd
With shameless laughter, Pagan oath, and jest,
Hard Romans brawling of their monstrous games;
He, all but deaf thro' age and weariness,
And muttering to himself 'The call of God'
And borne along by that full stream of men,
Like some old wreck on some indrawing sea,
Gain'd their huge Colosseum. The caged beast
Yell'd, as he yell'd of yore for Christian blood.
Three slaves were trailing a dead lion away,
One, a dead man. He stumbled in, and sat
Blinded ; but when the momentary gloom,

ST. TELEMACHUS

Made by the noonday blaze without, had left
His aged eyes, he raised them, and beheld
A blood-red awning waver overhead,
The dust send up a steam of human blood,
The gladiators moving toward their fight,
And eighty thousand Christian faces watch
Man murder man. A sudden strength from
heaven,

As some great shock may wake a palsied limb,
Turn'd him again to boy, for up he sprang,
And glided lightly down the stairs, and o'er
The barrier that divided beast from man
Slipt, and ran on, and flung himself between
The gladiatorial swords, and call'd 'Forbear
In the great name of Him who died for men,
Christ Jesus !' For one moment afterward
A silence follow'd as of death, and then
A hiss as from a wilderness of snakes,
Then one deep roar as of a breaking sea,
And then a shower of stones that stoned him
dead,

And then once more a silence as of death.

His dream became a deed that woke the
world,

For while the frantic rabble in half-amaze
Stared at him dead, thro' all the nobler hearts
In that vast Oval ran a shudder of shame.
The Baths, the Forum gabbled of his death,
And preachers linger'd o'er his dying words,
Which would not die, but echo'd on to reach
Honorius, till he heard them, and decreed

ST. TELEMACHUS

That Rome no more should wallow in this old
 lust
Of Paganism, and make her festal hour
Dark with the blood of man who murder'd man.

[For Honorius, who succeeded to the sovereignty over Europe, suppress the gladiatorial combats practised of old in Rome, on occasion of the following event. There was one Telemachus, embracing the ascetic mode of life, who setting out from the East and arriving at Rome for this very purpose, while that accursed spectacle was being performed, entered himself the circus, and descending into the arena, attempted to hold back those who wielded deadly weapons against each other. The spectators of the murderous fray, possess with the drunken glee of the demon who delights in such bloodshed, stoned to death the preacher of peace. The admirable Emperor learning this put a stop to that evil exhibition.—Theodoret's *Ecclesiastical History*.]

AKBAR'S DREAM

AN INSCRIPTION BY ABUL FAZL FOR A TEMPLE IN
KASHMIR (Blochmann xxxii.)

O GOD in every temple I see people that see thee, and in every
language I hear spoken, people praise thee.

Polytheism and Islám feel after thee.

Each religion says, 'Thou art one, without equal.'

If it be a mosque people murmur the holy prayer, and if it
be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes
the mosque.

But it is thou whom I search from temple to temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy;
for neither of them stands behind the screen of thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the orthodox.

But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the
perfume seller.

AKBAR *and* ABUL FAZL *before the palace at*
Futehpur-Sikri at night

'LIGHT of the nations' ask'd his Chronicler
Of Akbar 'what has darken'd thee to-night?'
Then, after one quick glance upon the stars,
And turning slowly toward him, Akbar said
'The shadow of a dream—an idle one

AKBAR'S DREAM

It may be. Still I raised my heart to heaven,
I pray'd against the dream. To pray, to do—
To pray, to do according to the prayer,
Are, both, to worship Alla, but the prayers,
That have no successor in deed, are faint
And pale in Alla's eyes, fair mothers they
Dying in childbirth of dead sons. I vow'd
Whate'er my dreams, I still would do the right
Thro' all the vast dominion which a sword,
That only conquers men to conquer peace,
Has won me. Alla be my guide !

But come,
My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,
Sit by my side. While thou art one with me,
I seem no longer like a lonely man
In the king's garden, gathering here and there
From each fair plant the blossom choicest-grown
To wreath a crown not only for the king
But in due time for every Mussulmân,
Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and Parsee,
Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan.

Well spake thy brother in his hymn to heaven
"Thy glory baffles wisdom. All the tracks
Of science making toward Thy Perfectness
Are blinding desert sand ; we scarce can spell
The Alif of Thine alphabet of Love."

He knows Himself, men nor themselves nor
Him,
For every splinter'd fraction of a sect
Will clamour "*I am on the Perfect Way,*
All else is to perdition."

AKBAR'S DREAM

Shall the rose
Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the palm
Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?
The mango spurn the melon at his foot?
"Mine is the one fruit Alla made for man."

Look how the living pulse of Alla beats
Thro' all His world. If every single star
Should shriek its claim "I only am in heaven"
Why that were such sphere-music as the Greek
Had hardly dream'd of. There is light in all,
And light, with more or less of shade, in all
Man-modes of worship; but our Ulama,
Who "sitting on green sofas contemplate
The torment of the damn'd" already, these
Are like wild brutes new-caged—the narrower
The cage, the more their fury. Me they front
With sullen brows. What wonder! I decreed
That even the dog was clean, that men may taste
Swine-flesh, drink wine; they know too that
whene'er

In our free Hall, where each philosophy
And mood of faith may hold its own, they blurt
Their furious formalisms, I but hear
The clash of tides that meet in narrow seas,—
Not the Great Voice not the true Deep.

To drive
A people from their ancient fold of Faith,
And wall them up perforce in mine—unwise,
Unkinglike;—and the morning of my reign
Was redden'd by that cloud of shame when

I . . .

AKBAR'S DREAM

I hate the rancour of their castes and creeds,
I let men worship as they will, I reap
No revenue from the field of unbelief.
I cull from every faith and race the best
And bravest soul for counsellor and friend.
I loathe the very name of infidel.
I stagger at the Korân and the sword.
I shudder at the Christian and the stake ;
Yet "Alla," says their sacred book, "is Love,"
And when the Goan Padre quoting Him,
Issa Ben Mariam, his own prophet, cried
"Love one another little ones" and "bless"
Whom? even "your persecutors"! there me-
thought

The cloud was rifted by a purer gleam
Than glances from the sun of our Islâm.

And thou rememberest what a fury shook
Those pillars of a moulder'd faith, when he,
That other, prophet of their fall, proclaimed
His Master as "the Sun of Righteousness,"
Yea, Alla here on earth, who caught and held
His people by the bridle-rein of Truth.

What art thou saying? "And was not Alla
call'd
In old Irân the Sun of Love? and Love
The net of truth?"

A voice from old Irân!
Nay, but I know it—*his*, the hoary Sheik,
On whom the women shrieking "Atheist" flung
Filth from the roof, the mystic melodist
Who all but lost himself in Alla, him

AKBAR'S DREAM

Abû Saïd——

—a sun but dimly seen
Here, till the mortal morning mists of earth
Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed and race
Shall bear false witness, each of each, no more,
But find their limits by that larger light,
And overstep them, moving easily
Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,
The truth of Love.

The sun, the sun ! they rail
At me the Zoroastrian. Let the Sun,
Who heats our earth to yield us grain and fruit,
And laughs upon thy field as well as mine,
And warms the blood of Shiah and Sunnee,
Symbol the Eternal ! Yea and may not kings
Express Him also by their warmth of love
For all they rule—by equal law for all ?
By deeds a light to men ?

But no such light
Glanced from our Presence on the face of one,
Who breaking in upon us yestermorn,
With all the Hells a-glare in either eye,
Yell'd "*hast thou brought us down a new Korân*
From heaven ? art *thou* the Prophet ? canst *thou*
work

Miracles ? " and the wild horse, anger, plunged
To fling me, and fail'd. Miracles ! no, not I
Nor he, nor any. I can but lift the torch
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,
Adoring That who made, and makes, and is,

AKBAR'S DREAM

And is not, what I gaze on—all else Form,
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.

 Ay but, my friend, thou knowest I hold that
 forms

Are needful : only let the hand that rules,
With politic care, with utter gentleness,
Mould them for all his people.

 And what are forms ?

Fair garments, plain or rich, and fitting close
Or flying looselier, warm'd but by the heart
Within them, moved but by the living limb,
And cast aside, when old, for newer,—Forms !
The Spiritual in Nature's market-place—
The silent Alphabet-of-heaven-in-man
Made vocal—banners blazoning a Power
That is not seen and rules from far away—
A silken cord let down from Paradise,
When fine Philosophies would fail, to draw
The crowd from wallowing in the mire of earth,
And all the more, when these behold their Lord,
Who shaped the forms, obey them, and himself
Here on this bank in *some* way live the life
Beyond the bridge, and serve that Infinite
Within us, as without, that All-in-all,
And over all, the never-changing One
And ever-changing Many, in praise of Whom
The Christian bell, the cry from off the mosque,
And vaguer voices of Polytheism
Make but one music, harmonising “ Pray.”

 There westward—under yon slow-falling star,
The Christians own a Spiritual Head ;

AKBAR'S DREAM

And following thy true counsel, by thine aid,
Myself am such in our Islâm, for no
Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse
My myriads into union under one ;
To hunt the tiger of oppression out
From office ; and to spread the Divine Faith
Like calming oil on all their stormy creeds,
And fill the hollows between wave and wave ;
To nurse my children on the milk of Truth,
And alchemise old hates into the gold
Of Love, and make it current ; and beat back
The menacing poison of intolerant priests,
Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—
One Alla ! one Kalifa !

Still—at times

A doubt, a fear,—and yester afternoon
I dream'd,—thou knowest how deep a well of love
My heart is for my son, Saleem, mine heir,—
And yet so wild and wayward that my dream—
He glares askance at thee as one of those
Who mix the wines of heresy in the cup
Of counsel—so—I pray thee——

Well, I dream'd

That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred fane,
A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,
But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd
To every breath from heaven, and Truth and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein ;
But while we stood rejoicing, I and thou,
I heard a mocking laugh “ the new Korân ! ”
And on the sudden, and with a cry “ Saleem ”

AKBAR'S DREAM

Thou, thou—I saw thee fall before me, and then
Me too the black-wing'd Azrael overcame,
But Death had ears and eyes ; I watch'd my son,
And those that follow'd, loosen, stone from stone,
All my fair work ; and from the ruin arose
The shriek and curse of trampled millions, even
As in the time before ; but while I groan'd,
From out the sunset pour'd an alien race,
Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,
Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt therein,
Nor in the field without were seen or heard
Fires of Súttee, nor wail of baby-wife,
Or Indian widow ; and in sleep I said
“ All praise to Alla by whatever hands
My mission be accomplish'd ! ” but we hear
Music : our palace is awake, and morn
Has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night
From off the rosy cheek of waking Day.
Our hymn to the sun. They sing it. Let us go.'

HYMN

I

Once again thou flame'st heavenward, once again
we see thee rise.
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human
hearts and eyes.

AKBAR'S DREAM

Every morning here we greet it, bowing
 lowly down before thee,
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine
 ever-changing skies.

II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light
 from clime to clime,
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in
 their woodland rhyme.
Warble bird, and open flower, and, men,
 below the dome of azure
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame
 that measures Time !

NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was born October 14, 1542, and died 1605. At 13 he succeeded his father Humayun; at 18 he himself assumed the sole charge of government. He subdued and ruled over fifteen large provinces; his empire included all India north of the Vindhya Mountains—in the south of India he was not so successful. His tolerance of religions and his abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame. He invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples: and his legislation was remarkable for vigour, justice and humanity.

'*Thy glory baffles wisdom.*' The Emperor quotes from a hymn to the Deity by Faizi, brother of Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and minister, who wrote the *Ain i Akbari* (Annals of Akbar). His influence on his age was immense. It may be that he and his brother Faizi led Akbar's mind away from Islām and the Prophet—this charge is brought against him by every Muhammadan

NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

writer ; but Abul Fazl also led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered Court, the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races, which Islâm in few other countries had to solve, was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result (Blochmann xxix.).

Abul Fazl thus gives an account of himself : 'The advice of my Father with difficulty kept me back from acts of folly ; my mind had no rest and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits on Lebanon. I longed for interviews with the Llamás of Tibet or with the padres of Portugal, and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land.'

He became the intimate friend and adviser of Akbar, and helped him in his tolerant system of government. Professor Blochmann writes : 'Impressed with a favourable idea of the value of his Hindu subjects, he (Akbar) had resolved when pensively sitting in the evenings on the solitary stone at Futehpur-Sikri to rule with an even hand all men in his dominions ; but as the extreme views of the learned and the lawyers continually urged him to persecute instead of to heal, he instituted discussions, because, believing himself to be in error, he thought it his duty as ruler to inquire.' 'These discussions took place every Thursday night in the Ibadat-khana, a building at Futehpur-Sikri, erected for the purpose' (Malleon).

In these discussions Abul Fazl became a great power, and he induced the chief of the disputants to draw up a document defining the 'divine Faith' as it was called, and assigning to Akbar the rank of a Mujahid, or supreme khalifah, the vicegerent of the one true God.

Abul Fazl was finally murdered at the instigation of Akbar's son Salim, who in his Memoirs declares that it was Abul Fazl who had perverted his father's mind so that he denied the divine mission of Mahomet, and turned away his love from his son.

Faizi. When Akbar conquered the North-West Provinces of India, Faizi, then 20, began his life as a poet, and earned his living as a physician. He is reported to have been very generous and to have treated the poor for nothing. His fame reached Akbar's ears, who commanded him to come to the camp at Chitor. Akbar was delighted with his varied knowledge and scholarship and made the poet teacher to his sons. Faizi at 33 was appointed Chief Poet (1588). He collected a fine library of 4300 MSS., and died at the age of 40 (1595), when Akbar incorporated his collection of rare books in the Imperial Library.

NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

The warring world of Hindostan. Akbar's rapid conquests and the good government of his fifteen provinces with their complete military, civil and political systems make him conspicuous among the great kings of history.

The Goan Padre. Abul Fazl relates that 'one night the Ibadat-khana was brightened by the presence of Padre Rodolpho, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him, and this afforded an opportunity for the display of the calm judgment and justice of the assembly. These men brought forward the old received assertions, and did not attempt to arrive at truth by reasoning. Their statements were torn to pieces, and they were nearly put to shame, when they began to attack the contradictions of the Gospel, but they could not prove their assertions. With perfect calmness and earnest conviction of the truth he replied to their arguments.'

Abû Sa'îd. 'Love is the net of Truth, Love is the noose of God' is a quotation from the great Sufee poet Abû Sa'îd—born A.D. 968, died at the age of 83. He is a mystical poet, and some of his expressions have been compared to our George Herbert. Of Shaikh Abû Sa'îd it is recorded that he said, 'when my affairs had reached a certain pitch I buried under the dust my books and opened a shop on my own account (*i.e.* began to teach with authority), and verily men represented me as that which I was not, until it came to this, that they went to the Qâdhî and testified against me of unbelieverhood; and women got upon the roofs and cast unclean things upon me.' (*Vide* reprint from article in *National Review*, March 1891, by C. J. Pickering.)

Aziz. I am not aware that there is any record of such intrusion upon the king's privacy, but the expressions in the text occur in a letter sent by Akbar's foster-brother Aziz, who refused to come to court when summoned and threw up his government, and 'after writing an insolent and reproachful letter to Akbar in which he asked him if he had received a book from heaven, or if he could work miracles like Mahomet that he presumed to introduce a new religion, warned him that he was on the way to eternal perdition, and concluded with a prayer to God to bring him back into the path of salvation' (Elphinstone).

'The Koran, the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David are called *books* by way of excellence, and their followers "People of the Book"' (Elphinstone).

Akbar according to Abdel Kadir had his son Murad instructed

NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

in the Gospel, and used to make him begin his lessons 'In the name of Christ' instead of in the usual way 'In the name of God.'

*To drive
A people from their ancient fold of Truth, etc.*

Malleson says : 'This must have happened because Akbar states it, but of the forced conversions I have found no record. This must have taken place whilst he was still a minor, and whilst the chief authority was wielded by Bairam.'

'I reap no revenue from the field of unbelief'

The Hindus are fond of pilgrimages, and Akbar removed a remunerative tax raised by his predecessors on pilgrimages. He also abolished the *fezza* or capitation tax on those who differed from the Mahomedan faith. He discouraged all *excessive* prayers, fasts and pilgrimages.

Suttee. Akbar decreed that every widow who showed the least desire not to be burnt on her husband's funeral pyre, should be let go free and unharmed.

baby-wife. He forbade marriage before the age of puberty.

Indian widow. Akbar ordained that re-marriage was lawful.

Music. 'About a watch before daybreak,' says Abul Fazl, the musicians played to the king in the palace. 'His Majesty had such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess.'

'*The Divine Faith.*' The Divine Faith slowly passed away under the immediate successors of Akbar. An idea of what the Divine Faith was may be gathered from the inscription at the head of the poem. The document referred to, Abul Fazl says, 'brought about excellent results—(1) the Court became a gathering place of the sages and learned of all creeds; the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized, and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good features; (2) perfect toleration or peace with all was established; and (3) the perverse and evil-minded were covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty, and these stood in the pillory of disgrace.' Dated September 1579—Ragab 987 (Blochmann xiv.).

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT¹

O GREAT AND GALLANT SCOTT,
TRUE GENTLEMAN, HEART, BLOOD AND BONE,
I WOULD IT HAD BEEN MY LOT
TO HAVE SEEN THEE, AND HEARD THEE, AND KNOWN.

¹ I have adopted Sir Walter Scott's version of the following story as given in his last journal (Death of Il Bizarro)—but I have taken the liberty of making some slight alterations.

THE BANDIT'S DEATH

SIR, do you see this dagger ? nay, why do you start aside ?

I was not going to stab you, tho' I *am* the Bandit's bride.

You have set a price on his head : I may claim it without a lie.

What have I here in the cloth ? I will show it you by-and-by.

Sir, I was once a wife. I had one brief summer of bliss.

But the Bandit had woo'd me in vain, and he stabb'd my Piero with this.

And he dragg'd me up there to his cave in the mountain, and there one day

He had left his dagger behind him. I found it. I hid it away.

THE BANDIT'S DEATH

For he reek'd with the blood of Piero ; his kisses
were red with his crime,
And I cried to the Saints to avenge me. They
heard, they bided their time.

In a while I bore him a son, and he loved to
dandle the child,
And that was a link between us ; but I—to be
reconciled ?—

No, by the Mother of God, tho' I think I hated
him less,
And—well, if I sinn'd last night, I will find the
Priest and confess.

Listen ! we three were alone in the dell at the
close of the day.
I was lilting a song to the babe, and it laugh'd
like a dawn in May.

Then on a sudden we saw your soldiers crossing
the ridge,
And he caught my little one from me : we dipt
down under the bridge

By the great dead pine—you know it—and heard
as we crouch'd below,
The clatter of arms, and voices, and men passing
to and fro.

THE BANDIT'S DEATH

Black was the night when we crept away—not a
star in the sky—

Hush'd as the heart of the grave, till the little
one utter'd a cry.

I whisper'd 'give it to me,' but he would not
answer me—then

He gript it so hard by the throat that the boy
never cried again.

We return'd to his cave—the link was broken—
he sobb'd and he wept,

And cursed himself; then he yawn'd, for the
wretch *could* sleep, and he slept

Ay, till dawn stole into the cave, and a ray red
as blood

Glanced on the strangled face—I could make
Sleep Death, if I would—

Glared on at the murder'd son, and the murder-
ous father at rest, . . .

I drove the blade that had slain my husband
thrice thro' his breast.

He was loved at least by his dog: it was chain'd,
but its horrible yell

'She has kill'd him, has kill'd him, has kill'd
him' rang out all down thro' the dell,

THE BANDIT'S DEATH

Till I felt I could end myself too with the dagger
—so deafen'd and dazed—
Take it, and save me from it! I fled. I was
all but crazed

With the grief that gnaw'd at my heart, and the
weight that dragg'd at my hand ;
But thanks to the Blessed Saints that I came on
none of his band ;

And the band will be scatter'd now their gallant
captain is dead,
For I with this dagger of his—do you doubt
me? Here is his head !

THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

This is written in the dialect which was current in my youth at Spilsby and in the country about it.

I

EH ? good daäy ! good daäy ! thaw it bean't not
mooch of a daäy,
Nasty, casselty¹ weather ! an' mea haäfe down
wi' my haäy !²

II

How be the farm gittin on ? noäways. Gittin
on i'deeäd !
Why, tonups was haäfe on 'em fingers an' toäs,³
an' the mare brokken-kneeäd,
An' pigs didn't sell at fall,⁴ an' wa lost wer
Haldeny cow,
An' it beäts ma to knaw wot she died on, but
wool's looking oop ony how.

¹ 'Casselty,' casualty, chance weather.

² 'Haäfe down wi' my haäy,' while my grass is only half-mown.

³ 'Fingers and toes,' a disease in turnips. ⁴ 'Fall,' autumn.

CHURCH-WARDEN AND CURATE

III

An' soä they've maäde tha a parson, an' thou'll
git along, niver fear,
Fur I beän chuch-warden mysen i' the parish
fur fifteen year.
Well—sin ther beä chuch-wardens, ther mun
be parsons an' all,
An' if t'ōne stick alongside t'uther¹ the chuch
weänt happen a fall.

IV

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' ageän the toithe
an' the raäte,
Till I fun² that it warn't not the gaäinist³ waäy
to the narra Gaäte.
An' I can't abeär 'em, I can't, fur a lot on 'em
coom'd ta-year⁴—
I wur down wi' the rheumatis then—to *my* pond
to wesh thessens theere—
Sa I sticks like the ivin⁵ as long as I lives to the
owd church now,
Fur they wesh'd their sins i' *my* pond, an' I
doubts they poison'd the cow.

¹ 'If t'ōne stick alongside t'uther,' if the one hold by the other.
One is pronounced like 'own.'

² 'Fun,' found.

⁴ 'Ta-year,' this year.

³ 'Gaäinist,' nearest.

⁵ 'Ivin,' ivy.

CHURCH-WARDEN AND CURATE

V

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop. They say 'at he
coom'd fra nowt—
Burn i' traäde. Sa I warrants 'e niver said haafe
wot 'e thowt,
But 'e creeäpt an' 'e crawl'd along, till 'e feeäld
'e could howd 'is oän,
Then 'e married a greät Yerl's darter, an' sits o'
the Bishop's throän.

VI

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an' tha weant
be taakin' offence,
Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a hoonderd
haäcre o' sense—
But sich an obstropulous¹ lad—naay, naay—fur
I minds tha sa well,
Tha'd niver not hopple² thy tongue, an' the
tongue's sit afire o' Hell,
As I says to my missis to-daay, when she hurl'd
a plaäte at the cat
An' anooother ageän my noäse. Ya was niver sa
bad as that.

¹ 'Obstropulous,' obstreperous—here the Curate makes a sign of deprecation.

² 'Hopple' or 'hobble,' to tie the legs of a skittish cow when she is being milked.

CHURCH-WARDEN AND CURATE

VII

But I minds when i' Howlaby beck won daäy
ya was ticklin' o' trout,
An' keeäper 'e seed ya an' roon'd, an' 'e beal'd¹
to ya 'Lad coom hout'
An' ya stood oop naäkt i' the beck, an' ya tell'd
'im to knaw his awn plaäce
An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya thraw'd
the fish i' 'is faäce,
An' 'e torn'd² as red as a stag-tuckey's³ wattles,
but theer an' then
I coämb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd niver
not do it ageän.

VIII

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden, when
thou was a height-year-howd,⁴
An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pippins as iver
they'd 'owd,⁵
An' thou was as peärky⁶ as owt, an' tha maäde
me as mad as mad,
But I says to tha 'keep 'em, an' welcome' fur
thou was the Parson's lad.

¹ 'Beal'd,' bellowed.

² In such words as 'torned' (turned), 'hurled,' the *r* is hardly audible.

³ 'Stag-tuckey,' turkey-cock.

⁴ 'Height-year-howd,' eight-year-old.

⁵ 'Owd,' hold.

⁶ 'Peärky,' pert.

CHURCH-WARDEN AND CURATE

IX

An Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then taäkes
 kindly to me,
An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an' coom'd
 to the top o' the tree,
Fur Quoloty's hall my friends, an' they maäkes
 ma a help to the poor,
When I gits the plaäte fuller o' Soondays nor
 ony chuch-warden afoor,
Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep' mysen
 meeäk as a lamb,
An' saw by the Graäce o' the Lord, Mr. Harry,
 I ham wot I ham.

X

But Parson 'e *will* speäk out, saw, now 'e be
 sixty-seven,
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur owt but
 the Kingdom o' Heaven ;
An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver tha
 meäns to git 'igher,
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld,¹ an' not
 the faults o' the Squire.
An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' somewheers
 i' the Wowd² or the Fen,
If tha cottons down to thy betters, an' keeäps
 thysen to thysen.

¹ 'Wo'ld,' the world. Short o.

² 'Wowd,' wold.

CHURCH-WARDEN AND CURATE

But niver not speäk plaain out, if tha wants to
 git forrards a bit,
But creeäp along the hedge-bottoms, an' thou'll
 be a Bishop yit.

XI

Naäy, but tha *mun* speäk hout to the Baptises
 here i' the town,
Fur moäst on 'em talks ageän tithe, an' I'd like
 tha to preäch 'em down,
Fur *they*'ve bin a-preächin' *mea* down, they heve,
 an' I haätes 'em now,
Fur they leäved their nasty sins i' *my* pond, an'
 it poison'd the cow.

CHARITY

I

WHAT am I doing, you say to me, 'wasting the
sweet summer hours' ?
Haven't you eyes ? I am dressing the grave of
a woman with flowers.

II

For a woman ruin'd the world, as God's own
scriptures tell,
And a man ruin'd mine, but a woman, God bless
her, kept me from Hell.

III

Love me ? O yes, no doubt—how long—till
you threw me aside !
Dresses and laces and jewels and never a ring for
the bride.

CHARITY

IV

All very well just now to be calling me darling
and sweet,
And after a while would it matter so much if I
came on the street ?

V

You when I met you first—when *he* brought
you !—I turn'd away
And the hard blue eyes have it still, that stare of
a beast of prey.

VI

You were his friend—you—you—when he
promised to make me his bride,
And you knew that he meant to betray me—you
knew—you knew that he lied.

VII

He married an heiress, an orphan with half a
shire of estate,—
I sent him a desolate wail and a curse, when I
learn'd my fate.

CHARITY

VIII

For I used to play with the knife, creep down
to the river-shore,
Moan to myself 'one plunge—then quiet for
evermore.'

IX

Would the man have a touch of remorse when
he heard what an end was mine?
Or brag to his fellow rakes of his conquest over
their wine?

X

Money—my hire—*his* money—I sent him back
what he gave,—
Will you move a little that way? your shadow
falls on the grave.

XI

Two trains clash'd: then and there he was
crush'd in a moment and died,
But the new-wedded wife was unharm'd, tho'
sitting close at his side.

CHARITY

XII

She found my letter upon him, my wail of reproach and scorn ;
I had cursed the woman he married, and him,
and the day I was born.

XIII

They put him aside for ever, and after a week—
no more—
A stranger as welcome as Satan—a widow came
to my door :

XIV

So I turn'd my face to the wall, I was mad, I
was raving-wild,
I was close on that hour of dishonour, the birth
of a baseborn child.

XV

O you that can flatter your victims, and juggle,
and lie and cajole,
Man, can you even guess at the love of a soul
for a soul ?

CHARITY

XVI

I had cursed her as woman and wife, and in
 wife and woman I found
The tenderest Christ-like creature that ever stept
 on the ground.

XVII

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed me, she
 sat day and night by my bed,
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy born
 happily dead.

XVIII

And her name? what was it? I ask'd her.
 She said with a sudden glow
On her patient face 'My dear, I will tell you
 before I go.'

XIX

And I when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd, I sprang
 from my seat,
I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung myself
 down at her feet,

CHARITY

XX

And we pray'd together for *him*, for *him* who had
given her the name.

She has left me enough to live on. I need no
wages of shame.

XXI

She died of a fever caught when a nurse in a
hospital ward.

She is high in the Heaven of Heavens, she is
face to face with her Lord,

XXII

And He sees not her like anywhere in this
pitiless world of ours !

I have told you my tale. Get you gone. I am
dressing her grave with flowers.

KAPIOLANI

Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of this century. She won the cause of Christianity by openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess Peelè. In spite of their threats of vengeance she ascended the volcano Mauna-Loa, then clambered down over a bank of cinders 400 feet high to the great lake of fire (nine miles round)—Kilauēä—the home and haunt of the goddess, and flung into the boiling lava the consecrated berries which it was sacrilege for a woman to handle.

I

WHEN from the terrors of Nature a people have
fashion'd and worship a Spirit of Evil,
Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who calls to
them
'Set yourselves free !'

II

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol a valor-
ous weapon in olden England !
Great and greater, and greatest of women, island
heroine, Kapiolani

KAPIOLANI

Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries, and
dared the Goddess, and freed the people
Of Hawa-i-ee !

III

A people believing that Peelè the Goddess would
wallow in fiery riot and revel
On Kilauēä,
Dance in a fountain of flame with her devils, or
shake with her thunders and shatter her
island,
Rolling her anger
Thro' blasted valley and flaring forest in blood-
red cataracts down to the sea !

IV

Long as the lava-light
Glares from the lava-lake
Dazing the starlight,
Long as the silvery vapour in daylight
Over the mountain
Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be mingled
with either on Hawa-i-ee.

V

What said her Priesthood ?
' Woe to this island if ever a woman should
handle or gather the berries of Peelè !

KAPIOLANI

Accurséd were she !
And woe to this island if ever a woman should
climb to the dwelling of Peelè the
Goddess !
Accurséd were she !'

VI

One from the Sunrise
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before him
Vanish'd shadow-like
Gods and Goddesses,
None but the terrible Peelè remaining as Kapio-
lani ascended her mountain,
Baffled her priesthood,
Broke the Taboo,
Dipt to the crater,
Call'd on the Power adored by the Christian,
and crying 'I dare her, let Peelè avenge
herself' !
Into the flame-billow dash'd the berries, and
drove the demon from Hawa-i-ee.

THE DAWN

“ You are but children.”

Egyptian Priest to Solon.

I

RED of the Dawn !

Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms of a
Moloch of Tyre,
Man with his brotherless dinner on man in
the tropical wood,
Priests in the name of the Lord passing souls
thro' fire to the fire,
Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey that float
upon human blood !

II

Red of the Dawn !

Godless fury of peoples, and Christless frolic of
kings,
And the bolt of war dashing down upon cities
and blazing farms,

THE DAWN

For Babylon was a child new-born, and Rome
was a babe in arms,
And London and Paris and all the rest are as yet
but in leading-strings.

III

Dawn not Day,
While scandal is mouthing a bloodless name at
her cannibal feast,
And rake-ruin'd bodies and souls go down in
a common wreck,
And the press of a thousand cities is prized for
it smells of the beast,
Or easily violates virgin Truth for a coin or a
cheque.

IV

Dawn not Day !
Is it Shame, so few should have climb'd from
the dens in the level below,
Men, with a heart and a soul, no slaves of a
four-footed will ?
But if twenty million of summers are stored
in the sunlight still,
We are far from the noon of man, there is time
for the race to grow.

THE DAWN

v

Red of the Dawn !

Is it turning a fainter red ? so be it, but when
shall we lay

The Ghost of the Brute that is walking and
haunting us yet, and be free ?

In a hundred, a thousand winters ? Ah, what
will *our* children be,

The men of a hundred thousand, a million
summers away ?

THE MAKING OF MAN

WHERE is one that, born of woman, altogether
can escape
From the lower world within him, moods of
tiger, or of ape?
Man as yet is being made, and ere the crown-
ing Age of ages,
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into
shape?

All about him shadow still, but, while the races
flower and fade,
Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining
on the shade,
Till the peoples all are one, and all their
voices blend in choric
Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finish'd. Man is
made.'

THE DREAMER

ON a midnight in midwinter when all but the
winds were dead,
'The meek shall inherit the earth' was a
Scripture that rang thro' his head,
Till he dream'd that a Voice of the Earth went
wailingly past him and said :

'I am losing the light of my Youth
And the Vision that led me of old,
And I clash with an iron Truth,
When I make for an Age of gold,
And I would that my race were run,
For teeming with liars, and madmen, and
knaves,
And wearied of Autocrats, Anarchs, and Slaves,
And darken'd with doubts of a Faith that
saves,
And crimson with battles, and hollow with
graves,
To the wail of my winds, and the moan of
my waves
I whirl, and I follow the Sun.'

THE DREAMER

Was it only the wind of the Night shrilling out
Desolation and wrong
Thro' a dream of the dark? Yet he thought
that he answer'd her wail with a song—

Moaning your losses, O Earth,
Heart-weary and overdone!
But all's well that ends well,
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

He is racing from heaven to heaven
And less will be lost than won,
For all's well that ends well,
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

The Reign of the Meek upon earth,
O weary one, has it begun?
But all's well that ends well,
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

For moans will have grown sphere-music
Or ever your race be run!
And all's well that ends well,
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

MECHANOPHILUS

(In the time of the first railways)

Now first we stand and understand
And sunder false from true,
And handle boldly with the hand,
And see and shape and do.

Dash back that ocean with a pier,
Strow yonder mountain flat,
A railway there, a tunnel here,
Mix me this Zone with that !

Bring me my horse—my horse ? my wings
That I may soar the sky,
For Thought into the outward springs,
I find her with the eye.

O will she, moonlike, sway the main,
And bring or chase the storm,
Who was a shadow in the brain,
And is a living form ?

MECHANOPHILUS

Far as the Future vaults her skies,
From this my vantage ground
To those still-working energies
I spy nor term nor bound.

As we surpass our fathers' skill,
Our sons will shame our own ;
A thousand things are hidden still
And not a hundred known.

And had some prophet spoken true
Of all we shall achieve,
The wonders were so wildly new,
That no man would believe.

Meanwhile, my brothers, work, and wield
The forces of to-day,
And plow the Present like a field,
And garner all you may !

You, what the cultured surface grows,
Dispense with careful hands :
Deep under deep for ever goes,
Heaven over heaven expands.

RIFLEMEN FORM !

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,
Storm in the South that darkens the day !
Storm of battle and thunder of war !
Well if it do not roll our way.
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form !
Ready, be ready against the storm !
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form !

Be not deaf to the sound that warns,
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea !
Are figs of thistles ? or grapes of thorns ?
How can a despot feel with the Free ?
Form, Form, Riflemen Form !
Ready, be ready to meet the storm !
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form !

Let your reforms for a moment go !
Look to your butts, and take good aims !
Better a rotten borough or so
Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames !

RIFLEMEN FORM !

Storm, Storm, Riflemen form !
Ready, be ready against the storm !
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form !

Form, be ready to do or die !
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's !
True we have got—*such* a faithful ally
That only the Devil can tell what he means.
Form, Form, Riflemen Form !
Ready, be ready to meet the storm !
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form !¹

¹ I have been asked to republish this old poem, which was first published in 'The Times,' May 9, 1859, before the Volunteer movement began.

THE TOURNEY

RALPH would fight in Edith's sight,
For Ralph was Edith's lover,
Ralph went down like a fire to the fight,
Struck to the left and struck to the right,
Roll'd them over and over.
'Gallant Sir Ralph,' said the king.

Casques were crack'd and hauberks hack'd,
Lances snapt in sunder,
Rang the stroke, and sprang the blood,
Knights were thwack'd and riven, and hew'd
Like broad oaks with thunder.
'O what an arm,' said the king.

Edith bow'd her stately head,
Saw them lie confounded,
Edith Montfort bow'd her head,
Crown'd her knight's, and flush'd as red
As poppies when she crown'd it.
'Take her Sir Ralph,' said the king.

THE WANDERER

THE gleam of household sunshine ends,
And here no longer can I rest ;
Farewell !—You will not speak, my friends,
Unfriendly of your parted guest.

O well for him that finds a friend,
Or makes a friend where'er he come,
And loves the world from end to end,
And wanders on from home to home !

O happy he, and fit to live,
On whom a happy home has power
To make him trust his life, and give
His fealty to the halcyon hour !

I count you kind, I hold you true ;
But what may follow who can tell ?
Give me a hand—and you—and you—
And deem me grateful, and farewell !

POETS AND CRITICS

THIS thing, that thing is the rage,
Helter-skelter runs the age ;
Minds on this round earth of ours
Vary like the leaves and flowers,
 Fashion'd after certain laws ;
Sing thou low or loud or sweet,
All at all points thou canst not meet,
 Some will pass and some will pause.

What is true at last will tell :
Few at first will place thee well ;
Some too low would have thee shine,
Some too high—no fault of thine—
 Hold thine own, and work thy will !
Year will graze the heel of year,
But seldom comes the poet here,
 And the Critic's rarer still.

A VOICE SPAKE OUT OF THE SKIES

A VOICE spake out of the skies
To a just man and a wise—
‘The world and all within it
Will only last a minute !’
And a beggar began to cry
‘Food, food or I die’ !
Is it worth his while to eat,
Or mine to give him meat,
If the world and all within it
Were nothing the next minute ?

DOUBT AND PRAYER

THO' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy rod,
Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain 'Alas !'
From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass
By that same path our true forefathers trod ;
And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod
Draw from my death Thy living flower and
grass,

Before I learn that Love, which is, and was
My Father, and my Brother, and my God !
Steel me with patience ! soften me with grief !
Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray,
Till this embattled wall of unbelief
My prison, not my fortress, fall away !
Then, if Thou willest, let my day be brief,
So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the day.

FAITH

I

DOUBT no longer that the Highest is the wisest
and the best,
Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy hope
or break thy rest,
Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the ship-
wreck, or the rolling
Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or the
famine, or the pest !

II

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower than
the heart's desire !
Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a
gleam of what is higher.
Wait till Death has flung them open, when
the man will make the Maker
Dark no more with human hatreds in the glare
of deathless fire !

THE SILENT VOICES

WHEN the dumb Hour, clothed in black,
Brings the Dreams about my bed,
Call me not so often back,
Silent Voices of the dead,
Toward the lowland ways behind me,
And the sunlight that is gone !
Call me rather, silent voices,
Forward to the starry track
Glimmering up the heights beyond me
On, and always on !

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

I

WILL my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in
your deeps and heights ?
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens,
of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery
clash of meteorites ?

II

‘ Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of
thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power
which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the
silent Opener of the Gate.’

THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE

To the Mourners

THE bridal garland falls upon the bier,
The shadow of a crown, that o'er him hung,
Has vanish'd in the shadow cast by Death.

So princely, tender, truthful, reverent, pure—
Mourn ! That a world-wide Empire mourns
with you,

That all the Thrones are clouded by your loss,
Were slender solace. Yet be comforted ;
For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,
Then, after his brief range of blameless days,
The toll of funeral in an Angel ear
Sounds happier than the merriest marriage-bell.

The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,
His shadow darkens earth : his truer name
Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the roll
And march of that Eternal Harmony
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope !

CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
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